NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07998278 5

Wesley
Z 1 Z

Post 8vo. Lond. 1845. 8°.
For. Trans. " " Bristol 1760. 12°
" " Lond. 1796-1800. 4v.

No Mention of this Amer reprint
in Trübner Catalogue.

SERMONS

ON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.
Fellow of Lincoln-College, Oxford.

VOL. V.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY *EZEKIEL COOPER* AND *JOHN WILSON*, NO. 249 PEARL-STREET, FOR THE METHODIST CONNECTION IN THE UNITED STATES.

J. C. TOTTEN, PRINTER.

1806.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
166795
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.
1900.

PREFACE.

1. A Gentlemen in the West of *England* informed me a few days ago, that a Clergyman in his neighbourhood, designed to print in two or three Volumes the Sermons which had been published in the ten Volumes of the *Arminian Magazine*. I had been frequently solicited to do this myself, and had as often answered, "I leave this for my Executors." But if it must be done before I go hence, methinks I am the properest person to do it.

2. I intend therefore to set about it without delay. And if it pleases God to continue to me a little longer the use of my Understanding and Memory, I know not that I can employ them better. And perhaps I may be better able than another, to revise my own writings: in order either to retrench what is redundant, to supply what is wanting, or to make any farther alterations which shall appear needful.

3. To make these plain discourses more useful, I purpose now to range them in proper order: placing those first which are intended to throw light on some important Christian Doctrines: and afterwards those which more directly relate to some branch of Christian Practice. And I shall endeavour to place them all in such an order, that one may illustrate and confirm the other. There may be the greater need of this, because they were occasionally written during a course of years, without any order or connexion at all; just as this or the other subject, either occurred to my own mind, or was suggested to me, at various times, by one or another friend.

4. To complete the number of twelve Sermons in every Volume, I have added six Sermons to those printed in the Magazines. And I did this the rather, because the subjects were important and cannot be too much insisted on.

5. Is there need to apologize to sensible persons, for the plainness of my Stile? A Gentleman whom I much love and respect, lately informed me, with much tenderness and courtesy, That "men of candour made great allowance, for the decay of my Faculties; and did not expect me to write now, either with regard to

Sentiment or Language, as I did thirty or forty years ago." Perhaps they are decayed, though I am not conscious of it. But is not this a fit occasion to explain myself, concerning the Stile I use, from Choice not Necessity? I *could* even now write as floridly and rhetorically as even the admired Dr. *B*—. But I dare not, because I seek the honour that cometh of God only. What is the praise of man to *me*, that have one foot in the grave, and am stepping into the land, whence I shall not return? Therefore I dare no more write in a *fine Stile*, than wear a fine coat. But were it otherwise, had I time to spare, I should still write just as I do. I should purposely decline what many admire, an highly-ornamented Stile. I cannot relish *French* Oratory: I despise it from my heart. Let those that please be in raptures at the pretty, elegant sentences of *Massillon* or *Bourdaloue*. But give me the plain nervous Stile of Dr. *South*, Dr. *Bates*, or Mr. *John Howe*. And for Elegance, shew me any *French* Writer, who exceeds Dean *Young*, or Mr. *Seed*. Let who will admire the *French* frippery: I am still for plain, sound *English*.

6. I think a Preacher or a Writer of Sermons has lost his way, when he imitates any of the *French* Orators: even the most famous of them, even *Massillon* or *Bour-*

daloue. Only let his language be plain, proper and clear; and it is enough. God himself has told us how to speak, both as to the matter and the manner: *If any man speak*, in the name of God, *let him speak as the oracles of God*. And if he would imitate any part of these above the rest, let it be the first Epistle of St. *John*. This is the stile, the most excellent stile for every Gospel Preacher. And let him aim at no more Ornament than he finds in that sentence, which is the sum of the whole Gospel, *We love Him, because He hath first loved us*.

London, Jan. 1, 1788.

On ETERNITY.

A

SERMON

On PSALM XC. 2.

Psalm xc. 2.

From Everlasting to Everlasting thou art God.

1. I Would fain speak of that awful subject Eternity. But how can we grasp it in our thought? It is so vast, that the narrow mind of man is utterly unable to comprehend it. But does it not bear some affinity to another incomprehensible thing, Immensity? May not Space, though an unsubstantial thing be compared with another unsubstantial thing, Duration? But what is Immensity? It is boundless Space. And what is Eternity? It is boundless Duration.

2. Eternity has generally been considered, as divisible into two parts: which have been termed, Eternity *a parte ante*, and Eternity *a parte post:* that is, in plain English, that Eternity which is past, and that Eternity which is to come. And does there not seem to be an intimation of this distinction in the text? *Thou art God from everlasting.* Here is an expression of that Eternity which is past—*to everlasting.* Here is an expression of that Eternity which is to come. Perhaps indeed some may think it is not strictly proper to say, There is an Eternity that is past. But the meaning is easily understood: we mean thereby, Duration which had no beginning; as by Eternity to come we mean that Duration which will have no end.

3. It is God alone, who (to use the exalted language of Scripture) *inhabiteth Eternity* in both these senses.

The great Creator alone, (not any of his creatures) is *from everlasting to everlasting:* it is Duration alone, as it had no beginning, so it cannot have any end. On this consideration it is, that one speaks thus, in addressing *Immanuel*, God with us,

" Hail God the Son, with glory crown'd,
E'er time began to be;
Thron'd with thy Sire through half the round
Of wide Eternity!"

And again,

" Hail God the Son, with glory crown'd
When time shall cease to be:
Thron'd with the Father through the round
Of whole Eternity!"

4. " E'er time began to be."—But what is *Time?* It is not easy to say, as frequently as we have had the word in our mouth. We know not what it properly is: we cannot well tell how to define it. But is it not in some sense a fragment of Eternity, broken off at both ends? That portion of duration which commenced when the world began, which will continue as long as this world endures, and then expire for ever? That portion of it which is at present measured by the revolution of the sun and planets, lying (so to speak) between two Eternities, that which is past, and that which is to come. But as soon as the heavens and the earth flee away from the face of Him that sitteth on the great white throne, time will be no more, but sink for ever into the ocean of Eternity.

5. But by what means can a mortal man, the creature of a day, form any idea of Eternity? What can we find within the compass of nature, to illustrate it

by? With what comparison shall we compare it? What is there that bears any resemblance to it? Does there not seem to be some sort of analogy between boundless Duration and boundless Space? The great Creator, the Infinite Spirit, inhabits both the one and the other. This is one of his peculiar prerogatives: "Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" Yea, not only the utmost regions of Creation, but all the expanse of boundless Space? Mean time how many of the children of men may say,

"Lo, on a narrow neck of land,
'Midst two unbounded seas I stand
Secure, insensible!
A point of time, a moment's space,
Removes me to that heavenly place,
Or shuts me up in hell?"

6. But leaving one of these unbounded seas to the Father of Eternity, to whom alone Duration without beginning belongs, let us turn our thoughts on Duration without end. This is not an incommunicable attribute of the great Creator; but he has been graciously pleased to make innumerable multitudes of his creatures partakers of it. He has imparted this not only to angels, and archangels, and all the companies of heaven, who are not intended to die, but to glorify him and live in his presence for ever: but also to the inhabitants of the earth, who dwell in houses of clay. Their bodies indeed are "crushed before the moth," but their souls will never die. God made them, as an ancient Writer speaks, to be *pictures of his own eternity*. Indeed all Spirits, we have reason to believe, are clothed with immortality: having no inward principle of corruption, and being liable to no external violence.

7. Perhaps we may go a step farther still. Is not Matter itself, as well as Spirit, in one sense eternal? Not indeed *a parte ante*, as some senseless Philosophers, both ancient and modern, have dreamed. Not that any thing had existed from Eternity; seeing, if so, it must be God. Yea, it must be the One God; for it is impossible there should be two Gods, or two Eternals. But although nothing beside the great God, can have existed from everlasting, none else can be eternal, *a parte ante;* yet there is no absurdity in supposing that all creatures are eternal, *a parte post.* All matter indeed is continually changing, and that into ten thousand forms. But that it is changeable does in no wise imply, that it is perishable. The substance may remain one and the same, though under innumerable different forms. It is very possible any portion of matter may be resolved into the atoms of which it was originally composed. But what reason have we to believe, that one of these atoms ever was or ever will be annihilated? It never can, unless by the uncontrolable power of its Almighty Creator. And is it probable that ever he will exert this power, in unmaking any of the things that he hath made? In this also, God is "not a son of man that he should repent." Indeed every creature under heaven does and must continually change its form: which we can now easily account for: as it clearly appears from late discoveries that ethereal fire enters into the composition of every part of the creation. Now this is essentially *edax rerum.* It is the universal menstruum, the discoherent of all things under the sun. By the force of this, even the strongest, the firmest bodies are dissolved. It appears from the experiment, repeatedly made by the Great lord Bacon, That even diamonds, by a high degree of heat, may be turned into dust. And

that in a still higher degree, (strange as it may seem) they will totally flame away. Yea, by this "the heavens (themselves) will be dissolved; the elements shall melt with fervent heat." But they will be only dissolved; not destroyed: they will melt; but they will not perish. Though they lose their present form, yet not a particle of them will ever lose its existence: but every atom of them will remain under one form or other to all eternity.

8. But still we would inquire, what is this eternity? How shall we pour any light upon this abstruse subject? It cannot be the object of our understanding. And with what comparison shall we compare it? How infinitely does it transcend all these? What are any temporal things placed in comparison with those that are eternal? What is the duration of the long-lived oak, of the ancient castle, of Trajan's Pillar, of Pompey's Amphitheatre? What is the antiquity of the Tuscan Urns, though probably older than the foundation of Rome; yea, of the Pyramids of Egypt, suppose they have remained upwards of three thousand years; when laid in the balance with eternity? It vanishes into nothing. Nay, what is the duration of "the everlasting hills," figuratively so called, which have remained ever since the general deluge, if not from the foundation of the world, in comparison of eternity? No more than an insignificant cypher. Go farther yet. Consider the duration, from the creation of the first-born sons of God; of Michael the Archangel in particular, to the hour when he shall be commissioned to sound his trumpet, and to utter his mighty voice through the vault of heaven, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment!" Is it not a moment, a point, a nothing in comparison of unfathomable eternity? Add to this a thousand, a million of years, add a million of

millions of ages, before the mountains were brought forth, or the earth and the round world were made: what is all this in comparison of that eternity which is past? Is it not less, infinitely less, than a single drop of water to the whole ocean? Yea, immeasurably less, than a day, an hour, a moment, to a million of ages. Go back a thousand millions still. Yet you are no nearer the beginning of eternity.

9. Are we able to form a more adequate conception of eternity to come? In order to this, let us compare it with the several degrees of duration, which we are acquainted with. An Ephemeron fly lives six hours, from six in the evening to twelve. This is a short life compared to that of a man, which continues threescore or fourscore years. And this itself is short, if it be compared to the nine hundred and sixty-nine years of Methuselah. Yet what are these years, yea, all that have succeeded each other from the time that the heavens and the earth were erected, to the time when the heavens shall pass away, and the earth with the works of it shall be burnt up, if we compare it to the length of that duration, which never shall have an end!

10. In order to illustrate this, a late author has repeated that striking thought of St. Cyprian. Suppose there were a ball of sand, as large as the globe of earth: suppose a grain of this sand were to be annihilated, reduced to nothing, in a thousand years: yet that whole space of duration, wherein this ball would be annihilating, at the rate of one grain in a thousand years, would bear infinitely less proportion to eternity, duration without end, than a single grain of sand would bear to all the mass.

11. To infix this important point the more deeply in your mind, consider another comparison. Sup-

pose the ocean to be so enlarged, as to include all the space between the earth and the starry heavens. Suppose a drop of this water to be annihilated, once in a thousand years: yet that whole space of duration, wherein this ocean would be annihilating, at the rate of one drop in a thousand years, would be infinitely less in proportion to eternity, than one drop of water to that whole ocean.

Look then at those Immortal Spirits, whether they are in this or the other world. When they shall have lived thousands of thousands of years, yea, millions of millions of ages, their duration will be but just begun: they will be only upon the threshold of eternity.

12. But besides this division of eternity into that which is past and that which is to come, there is another division of eternity, which is of unspeakable importance. That which is to come, as it relates to immortal spirits, is either a happy or a miserable eternity.

13. See the spirits of the righteous, that are already praising God in a happy eternity. We are ready to say, how short will it appear to those who drink of the rivers of pleasure at God's right hand? We are ready to cry out,

> "A day without night
> They dwell in his sight,
> And eternity seems as a day?"

But this is only speaking after the manner of men. For the measures of long and short, are only applicable to time, which admits of bounds, and not to unbounded duration. This rolls on (according to our low conceptions) with unutterable, inconceivable swiftness; if one would not rather say, it does

not roll, or move at all, but is one, still immoveable ocean. For the inhabitants of heaven "cease not day or night, (but) continually cry, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord, the God, the Almighty: who was, and who is, and who is to come!" And when millions of millions of ages are elapsed, their eternity is but just begun.

14. On the other hand, in what a condition are those immortal spirits, who have made choice of a miserable eternity? I say, made choice; for it is impossible this should be the lot of any creature, but by his own act and deed. The day is coming, when every soul will be constrained to acknowledge, in the sight of men and angels,

"No dire decree of thine did seal,
Or fix th' unalterable doom;
Consign my unborn soul to hell,
Or damn me from my mother's womb."

In what condition will such a spirit be, after the sentence is executed, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" Suppose him to be just now plunged into "the lake of fire, burning with brimstone, where they have no rest day or night, but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." For ever and ever! Why, if we were only to be chained down one day, yea, one hour, in a lake of fire: how amazingly long would one day, or one hour appear? I know not if it would not seem as a thousand years. But astonishing thought! After thousands of thousands, he has but just tasted of his bitter cup? After millions, it will be no nearer the end, than it was the moment it began.

15. What then is he, how foolish, how mad, in

how unutterable a degree of distraction, who seeming to have the understanding of a man, deliberately prefers temporal things to eternal? Who (allowing that absurd, impossible supposition, that wickedness is happiness: a supposition utterly contrary to all reason, as well as to matter of fact) prefers the happiness of a year, say a thousand years, to the happiness of eternity? In comparison of which, a thousand ages are infinitely less than a year, a day, a moment: especially when we take this into the consideration, (which indeed should never be forgotten) that the refusing of a happy eternity implies the chusing of a miserable eternity. For there is not, cannot be any medium between everlasting joy, and everlasting pain. It is a vain thought, which some have entertained, that death will put an end to the soul as well as the body. It will put an end to neither the one nor the other; it will only alter the manner of their existence. But when the body "returns to the dust as it was, the spirit will return to God that gave it." Therefore at the moment of death, it must be unspeakably happy or unspeakably miserable. And that misery will never end.

"Never! Where sinks the soul at the dread sound!
Into a gulf how dark, and how profound!"

How often would he, who had made the wretched choice, wish for the death both of his soul and body? It is not impossible, he might pray in some such manner as Dr. Young supposes,

"When I have writh'd ten thousand years in fire,
Ten thousand, thousand, let me then expire!"

16. Yet this unspeakable folly, this unutterable

madness, of preferring present things to eternal, is the disease of every man, born into the world, while in his natural state. For such is the constitution of our nature, that as the eye sees only such a portion of space at once, so the mind sees only such a portion of time at once. And as all the space that lies beyond this, is invisible to the eye, so all the time which lies beyond that compass, is invisible to the mind. So that we do not perceive either the space or the time which is at a distance from us. The eye sees distinctly the space that is near it, with the objects which it contains. In like manner, the mind sees distinctly those objects which are within such a distance of time. The eye does not see the beauties of China. They are at too great a distance. There is too great a space between us and them: therefore we are not affected by them. They are as nothing to us: it is just the same to us, as if they had no being. For the same reason the mind does not see either the beauties or the terrors of eternity. We are not at all affected by them, because they are so distant from us. On this account it is, that they appear to us as nothing: just as if they had no existence. Mean time we are wholly taken up with things present, whether in time or space; and things appear less and less as they are more and more distant from us, either in one respect or the other. And so it must be; such is the constitution of our nature, till nature is changed by almighty grace. But this is no manner of excuse for those who continue in their natural blindness to futurity: because a remedy for it is provided, which is found by all that seek it. Yea, it is freely given to all that sincerely ask it.

17. This remedy is faith. I do not mean that which is the faith of a Heathen, who believes that there is a God, and that he is a rewarder of them

that diligently seek him; but that which is defined by the apostle, *An evidence*, or conviction, *of things not seen;* a divine evidence and conviction of the invisible and the eternal world. This alone opens the eyes of the understanding, to see God and the things of God. This, as it were, takes away, or renders transparent, the impenetrable vail,

"Which hangs 'twixt mortal and immortal being."

When

"Faith lends its realizing light,
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly:
The invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye."

Accordingly, a believer (in the scriptural sense) lives in eternity, and walks in eternity. His prospect is enlarged. His view is not any longer bounded by present things: no, nor by an earthly hemisphere, though it were, as Milton speaks, "Tenfold the length of his terrene." Faith places the unseen, the eternal world, continually before his face. Consequently, he "looks not at the things that are seen:"

"Wealth, honour, pleasure, or what else,
This short-enduring world can give."

These are not his aim, the object of his pursuit, his desire or happiness: "but at the things that are not seen:" at the favour, the image and the glory of God: as well knowing, that "the things which are seen are temporal," a vapour, a shadow, a dream that vanishes away; whereas "the things that are not seen are eternal," real, solid, unchangeable.

18. What then can be a fitter employment for a wise man, than to meditate upon these things? Fre-

quently to expand his thoughts, "beyond the bounds of this diurnal sphere," and to expatiate above even the starry heavens, in the fields of eternity? What a means might it be, to confirm his contempt of the poor, little things of earth? When a man of huge possessions was boasting to his friend of the largeness of his estate, Socrates desired him to bring a map of the earth, and to point out Attica therein. When this was done (although not very easily, as it was a small country) he next desired Alcibiades, to point out his own estate therein. When he could not do this, it was easy to observe how trifling the possessions were, in which he so prided himself, in comparison of the whole earth? how applicable is this to the present case. Does any one value himself on his earthly possessions? Alas, what is the whole globe of earth, to the infinity of space? A mere speck of creation. And what is the life of man, yea the duration of the earth itself, but a speck of time, if it be compared to the length of eternity? Think of this! let it sink into your thoughts, till you have some conception, however imperfect, of

That "boundless, fathomless abyss,
Without a bottom or a shore."

19. But if naked eternity, so to speak, be so vast, so astonishing an object, as even to overwhelm your thought, how does it still enlarge the idea to behold it clothed with either happiness or misery! Eternal bliss or pain! Everlasting happiness, or everlasting misery? One would think it would swallow up every other thought in every reasonable creature. Allow me only this, "thou art on the brink of either a happy or miserable eternity:" thy Creator bids thee now stretch out thy hand, either to the one or

the other: and one would imagine no rational creature could think on any thing else. One would suppose, that this single point would engross his whole attention. Certainly it ought so to do: certainly if these things are so, there can be but one thing needful. O let you and I at least, whatever others do, chuse that better part which shall never be taken away from us!

20. Before I close this subject, permit me to touch upon two remarkable passages in the Psalms, (one in the 8th, the other in the 144th) which bear a near relation to it. The former is, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained: what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Here man is considered as a cypher, a point, compared to immensity. The latter is, "Lord, what is man, that thou hast such respect unto him? Man is like a thing of nought; his time passeth away like a shadow!" In the new translation, the words are stronger still. "What is man that thou takest knowledge of him! Or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!" Here the Psalmist seems to consider the life of man as a moment, a nothing compared to eternity. Is not the purport of the former; How can he that filleth heaven and earth, take knowledge of such an atom as man? How is it that he is not utterly lost in the immensity of God's works? Is not the purport of the latter, How can He that inhabiteth eternity, stoop to regard the creature of a day? One whose life passeth away like a shadow? Is not this a thought which has struck many serious minds, as well as it did David's, and created a kind of fear, lest they should be forgotten before Him, who grasps all space and all eternity? But does not this fear arise from a

kind of supposition, that God is such an one as ourselves? If we consider boundless space or boundless duration, we shrink into nothing before it. But God is not a man. A day, and million of ages are the same with Him. Therefore there is the same disproportion between Him and any finite being, as between Him and the creature of a day. Therefore whenever that thought recurs, whenever you are tempted to fear, lest you should be forgotten before the immense, the eternal God, remember that nothing is little or great, that no duration is long or short before Him. Remember that God *ita praesidet singulis sicut universis, et universis sicut singulis.* That he presides over every individual, as over the universe; and the universe as over each individual. So that you may boldly say,

Father, how wide thy glories shine,
Lord of the universe and mine?
Thy goodness watches o'er the whole,
As all the world were but one soul;
Yet counts my every sacred hair,
As I remain'd thy single care!

ON THE TRINITY.

A

SERMON

ON 1 JOHN v. 7

ADVERTISEMENT.

Some days since I was desired to preach on this text. I did so yesterday morning. In the afternoon I was pressed to write down and print my Sermon, if possible, before I left Cork. I have wrote it this morning: but I must beg the reader to make allowance for the disadvantages I am under; as I have not here any books to consult, nor indeed any time to consult them.

Cork, May 8, 1775.

1 JOHN v. 7.

There are Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One.

1. WHATSOEVER the generality of people may think, it is certain that opinion is not religion: no, not right opinion, assent to one, or to ten thousand truths. There is a wide difference between them. Persons may be quite right in their opinions, and yet have no religion at all. And on the other hand, persons may be truly religious who hold many wrong opinions. Can any one possibly doubt of this, while there are Romanists in the world? For who can deny, not only that many of them formerly have been truly religious, (as Thomas a Kempis, Gregory Lopez, and the Marquis de Renty,) but that many of them, even at this day, are real inward Christians? And yet what an heap of erroneous opinions do they

hold, delivered by tradition from their fathers? Nay, who can doubt of it, while there are Calvinists in the world? Assertors of absolute predestination? For who will dare to affirm that none of these are truly religious men? Not only many of them in the last century were burning and shining lights, but many of them are now real Christians, loving God and all mankind. And yet what are all the absurd opinions of all the Romanists in the world, compared to that one, that the God of love, the wise, just, merciful Father of the spirits of all flesh, has from all eternity fixt an absolute, unchangeable, irresistible decree, that part of mankind shall be saved, do what they will, and the rest damned, do what they can!

2. Hence we cannot but infer, that there are ten thousand mistakes, which may consist with real religion: with regard to which, every candid, considerate man will think and let think. But there are some truths more important than others. It seems there are some which are of deep importance. I do not term them *fundamental* truths; because that is an abiguous word; and hence there have been so many warm disputes about the number of *fundamentals*. But surely there are some, which it nearly concerns us to know, as having a close connexion with vital religion. And doubtless we may rank among these, that contained in the words above cited: "There are Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One."

3. I do not mean, that it is of importance to believe this or that *explication* of these words. I know not that any well-judging man would attempt to explain them at all. One of the best tracts which that great man, Dean Swift, ever wrote, was his sermon upon the Trinity. Herein he shows, that all who endea-

voured to explain it all, have utterly lost their way: have above all other persons hurt the cause which they intended to promote; having only, as Job speaks, "Darkened counsel by words without knowledge." It was in an evil hour, that these explainers began their fruitless work. I insist upon no explication at all; no, not even on the best I ever saw; I mean that which is given to us in the Creed commonly ascribed to Athanasius. I am far from saying, he who does not assent to this "shall without doubt perish everlastingly." For the sake of that and another clause, I for some time scrupled subscribing to that creed; till I considered, 1. That these sentences only *relate* to *wilful*, not involuntary unbelievers: to those who having all the means of knowing the truth, nevertheless obstinately reject it: 2. That they relate only to the *substance* of the doctrine there delivered; not to the philosophical *illustrations* of it.

4. I dare not insist upon any one's using the word *Trinity* or *Person*. I use them myself without any scruple, because I know of none better. But if any man has any scruple concerning them, who shall constrain him to use them? I cannot; much less would I burn a man live, and that with moist green wood, for saying, "Though I believe the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, yet I scruple using the words *trinity* and *persons*, because *I do* not find those terms in the Bible." These are the words which merciful John Calvin cites as wrote by Servitus in a letter to himself. I would insist only on the direct words unexplained, just as they lie in the text, "There are Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One."

5. "As they lie in the text:"—But here arises a question, Is that text genuine? Was it originally

written by the Apostle, or inserted in latter ages? Many have doubted of this: and in particular that great light of the Christian church, lately removed to the church above, Bengelius, the most pious, the most judicious, and the most laborious, of all the modern commentators on the New Testament. For some time he stood in doubt of its authenticity, because it is wanting in many of the ancient copies, but his doubts were removed by three considerations: 1. That though it is wanting in many copies, yet it is found in more, and those copies of the greatest authority: 1. That it is cited by a whole train of ancient writers, from the time of St. John to that of Constantine. This argument is conclusive: for they could not have cited it, had it not then been in the sacred canon. 3. That we can easily account for its being after that time wanting in many copies, when we remember, that Constantine's successor was a zealous Arian, who used every means to promote his bad cause, to spread Arianism throughout the empire: in particular, the erasing this text out of as many copies as fell into his hands. And he so far prevailed, that the age in which he lived, is commonly styled Seculum Arianum, the Arian age: there being then only one eminent man, who opposed him at the peril of his life. So that it was a proverb, "*Athanasius contra mundum;*" Athanasius against the world.

6. But it is objected, "Whatever becomes of the text, we cannot believe what we cannot comprehend. When therefore you require us to believe mysteries, we pray you to have us excused."

Here is a two-fold mistake. 1. We do not require you to believe any mystery in this, whereas you suppose the contrary. But 2. You do already believe many things which you cannot comprehend.

7. To begin with the latter. You do already believe many things which you cannot comprehend. For you believe there is a sun over your head. But, whether he stands still in the midst of his system, or not only revolves on his own axis, but "rejoiceth as a giant to run his course;" you cannot comprehend either one or the other. How he moves, or how he rests: by what power, what natural, mechanical power, is he upheld in the fluid ether? You cannot deny the fact: yet you cannot account for it, so as to satisfy any rational inquirer. You may indeed give us the hypothesis of Ptolemy, Tycho Brahe, Copernicus, and twenty more. I have read them over and over: I am sick of them, I care not three straws for them all.

"Each new solution but once more affords
New change of terms, and scaffolding of words:
In other garb my question I receive,
And take my doubt the very same I give."

Still I insist, the fact you believe: you cannot deny. But the manner you cannot comprehend.

8. You believe there is such a thing as light, whether flowing from the sun, or any other luminous body. But you cannot comprehend either its nature, or the manner wherein it flows. How does it move from Jupiter to the earth in eight minutes, two hundred thousand miles in a minute? How do the rays of a candle brought into the room, instantly disperse into every corner? Again: Here are three candles, yet there is but one light. Explain this, and I will explain the Three-One God.

9. You believe there is such a thing as air. It both covers you as a garment, and

"Wide interfus'd
Embraces round this florid earth."

But can you comprehend, How? Can you give me a satisfactory account of its nature, or the cause of its properties? Think only of one, its elasticity; can you account for this? It may be owing to electric fire attached to each particle of it: It may not: and neither you nor I can tell. But if we will not breathe it till we can comprehend it, our life is very near its period.

10. You believe there is such a thing as earth. Here you fix your foot upon it. You are supported by it. But do you comprehend what it is that supports the earth? "O, an elephant, says a Malabrian philosopher: and a bull supports him." But what supports the bull? The Indian and the Briton are equally at a loss for an answer. We know it is God that "spreadeth the north over the empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." This is the fact. But how? Who can account for this? Perhaps angelic, but not human creatures.

I know what is plausibly said concerning the powers of projection and attraction. But spin as fine as we can, matter of fact sweeps away our cobweb hypothesis. Connect the force of projection and attraction how you can, they will never produce a circular motion. The moment the projected steel comes within the attraction of the magnet, it does not form a curve, but drops down.

11. You believe you have a *soul*. "Hold there, says the Doctor:* I believe no such thing. If you have an immaterial soul, so have the brutes too." I will not quarrel with any that think they have; nay, I wish he could prove it. And surely I would rather allow them souls than I would give up my own. In this I cordially concur in the sentiment of the ho-

* Dr. *Bl—r*, in his late tract.

nest heathen, "*Si erro, libenter erro ; et me redargui valde recusem.*" If I err, I err willingly ; and I vehemently refuse to be convinced of it. And I trust most of those who do not believe a Trinity are of the same mind. Permit me then to go on. You believe you have a soul connected with this house of clay. But can you comprehend how ? What are the ties that unite the heavenly flame with the earthly clod ? You understand just nothing of the matter. So it is : but how, none can tell.

12. You surely believe you have a body, together with your soul, and that each is dependent on the other. Run only a thorn into your hand : immediately pain is felt in your soul ? On the other side, is shame felt in your soul ? Instantly a blush overspreads your cheek. Does the soul feel fear or violent anger ? presently the body trembles. These also are facts which you cannot deny : nor can you account for them.

13. I bring but one instance more. At the command of your soul, your hand is lifted up. But who is able to account for this ? for the connexion between the act of the mind, and the outward actions ! Nay, who can account for *muscular motion* at all, in any instance of it whatever ? When one of the most ingenious physicians in England had finished his lecture upon that head, he added,—"Now, Gentlemen, I have told you all the discoveries of our enlightened age. And now, if you understand one jot of the matter, you understand more than I do."

The short of the matter is this. Those who will not believe any thing but what they can comprehend, must not believe that there is a sun in the firmament, that there is light shining around them, that there is air, though it encompasses them on every side, that there is any earth, though they stand upon it. They

must not believe that they have a soul, no, nor that they have a body.

14. But, secondly, as strange as it may seem, in requiring you to believe "There are Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One:" you are not required to believe any mystery. Nay, that great and good man, Dr. Peter Browne, sometime Bishop of Cork, has proved at large, that the bible does not require you to believe any mystery at all. The bible barely requires you to believe such facts, not the manner of them. Now the mystery does not lie in the fact, but altogether in the manner.

For instance, "God said, let there be light, and there was light." I believe it: I believe the plain fact: there is no mystery at all in this. The mystery lies in the manner of it. But of this I believe nothing at all; nor does God require it of me.

Again. "The Word was made flesh." I believe this fact also. There is no mystery in it; but as to the manner how he was made flesh, wherein the mystery lies, I know nothing about it, I believe nothing about it. It is no more the object of my faith, than it is of my understanding.

15. To apply this to the case before us. "There are Three that bear record in Heaven—And these Three are One." I believe this fact also, (if I may use the expression) that God is Three and One. But the manner how, I do not comprehend: and I do not believe it. Now in this, in the manner, lies the mystery: and so it may; I have no concern with it. It is no object of my faith; I believe just so much as God has revealed, and no more. But this, the manner, he has not revealed: therefore I believe nothing about it. But would it not be absurd in me to deny the fact because I do not understand the man-

ner? That is, to reject *what God has revealed* because I do not comprehend *what he has not revealed.*

16. This is a point much to be observed. There are many things "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." Part of these God hath "revealed to us by his Spirit:" revealed; that is, unveiled, uncovered: that part he requires us to believe. Part of them he has not revealed: that we need not, and indeed cannot believe: it is far above, out of our sight.

Now where is the wisdom of rejecting what is revealed, because we do not understand what is not revealed? Of denying the fact which God has unveiled, because we cannot see the manner, which is veiled still?

17. Especially when we consider that what God has been pleased to reveal upon this head, is far from being a point of indifference, is a truth of the last importance. It enters into the very heart of Christianity; it lies at the root of all vital religion.

Unless these three are one, how can "all men honour the Son even as they honour the Father!" I know not what to do, says Socinus in a letter to his friend, with my untoward followers. They will not worship Jesus Christ. I tell them, it is written, "Let all the angels of God worship him." They answer, however that be, if he is not God, we dare not worship him. For, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

But the thing which I here particularly mean is this: the knowledge of the Three-One God is interwoven with all true Christian faith, with all vital religion.

I do not say that every real Christian can say with the marquis de Renty, "I bear about with me continually an experimental verity, and a plenitude of the presence of the ever-blessed Trinity." I apprehend this is not the experience of *babes*, but rather *fathers in Christ*.

But I know not how any one can be a Christian believer, till he "hath (as St. John speaks) the witness in himself: till the Spirit of God witnesses with his spirit, that he is a child of God;" that is, in effect, till God the Holy Ghost witnesses that God the Father has accepted him, through the merits of God the Son; and having this witness, he honours the Son, and the blessed Spirit, "even as he honours the Father."

18. Not that every Christian believer *adverts* to this; perhaps at first not one in twenty; but if you ask any of them a few questions, you will easily find it is implied in what he believes.

Therefore I do not see how it is possible for any to have vital religion, who deny that these Three are One. And all my hope for them is, not that they will be saved, during their unbelief, (unless on the footing of honest Heathens, upon the plea of invincible ignorance) but that God, before they go hence, will "bring them to the knowledge of the truth."

GOD'S APPROBATION OF HIS WORKS.

A

SERMON

ON GENESIS i. 31.

GENESIS i. 31.

And God saw every thing that he had made: and behold, it was very good.

1. WHEN God created the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein, at the conclusion of each day's work it is said, "And God saw that it was good" Whatever was created was good in its kind, suited to the end for which it was designed, adapted to promote the good of the whole, and the glory of the great Creator. This sentence it pleased God to pass with regard to each particular creature. But there is a remarkable variation of the expression, with regard to all the parts of the universe, taken in connexion with each other, and constituting one system. "And God saw every thing that he had made: and behold it was very good!"

2. How small a part of this great work of God is man able to understand! But it is our duty to contemplate what he has wrought, and to understand as much of it as we are able. For "the merciful Lord, (as the Psalmist observes) hath so done his marvellous works, (of creation as well as of providence) that they ought to be had in remembrance" by all that fear him, which they cannot well be, unless they are understood. Let us then by the assistance of that Spirit who giveth unto man understanding, endeavour to take a general survey of the works which God made in this lower world, as they were before they were disordered and depraved in consequence of the sin of man: we shall then easily see, that as every creature was good in its primeval state; so when all

were compacted in one general system, *behold, they were very good.* I do not remember to have seen any attempt of this kind, unless in that truly excellent poem, Milton's Paradise Lost.

1. "In the beginning God created the matter of the heavens and the earth." (So the words, as a great man observes, may properly be translated.) He first created the four elements, out of which the whole universe was composed, earth, water, air, and fire, all mingled together in one common mass. The grossest parts of this, the earth and water, were utterly without form, till God infused a principle of motion, commanding the air to move "upon the face of the waters." In the next place, "the Lord God said, "Let there be light: and there was light." Here are the four constituent parts of the universe: the true, original, simple elements. They were all essentially distinct from each other: and yet so intimately mixt together in all compound bodies, that we cannot find any, be it ever so minute, which does not contain them all.

2. "And God saw that every one of these was good," was perfect in its kind. The earth was good: the whole surface of it was beautiful in an high degree. To make it more agreeable,

"He cloth'd
The universal face with pleasant green."

He adorned it with flowers of every hue, and with shrubs and trees of every kind. And every part was fertile as well as beautiful: it was no where deformed by rough or ragged rocks: it did not shock the view with horrid precipices, huge chasms, or dreary caverns: with deep, impassable morasses, or de-

serts of barren sand. But we have not any authority to say, with some learned and ingenious authors, that there were no mountains on the original earth, no unevennesses on its surface. It is not easy to reconcile this hypothesis, with these words of Moses, "The waters increased—and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward (above the highest) did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered," Gen. vii. 19, 20. We have no reason to believe, that these mountains were produced by the deluge itself. Not the least intimation of this is given; therefore we cannot doubt but they existed before it: indeed they answered many excellent purposes, besides greatly increasing the beauty of the creation, by a variety of prospects, which had been totally lost, had the earth been one extended plain. Yet we need not suppose their sides were abrupt, or difficult of ascent. It is highly probable, that they rose and fell, by almost insensible degrees.

3. As to the internal parts of the earth, even to this day, we have scarce any knowledge of them. Many have supposed the centre of the globe to be surrounded with an abyss of fire. Many others have imagined it to be encompassed with an abyss of water; which they suppose to be termed in scripture, *the great deep*, Gen. vi. 11. all the fountains of which were broken up, in order to the general deluge. But however this was, we are sure all things were disposed therein, with the most perfect order and harmony. Hence there were no agitations within the bowels of the globe: no violent convulsions: no concussions of the earth; no earthquakes: but all was unmoved as the pillars of heaven. There were then no such things as eruptions of fire: there were no volcanos, or burning mountains. Neither

Vesuvius, Ætna, nor Hecla, if they had any being, then poured out smoke and flame: but were covered with a verdant mantle, from the top to the bottom.

The element of water, it is probable was then mostly confined within the great abyss. In the new earth as we are informed by the Apostle, Rev. xxi. 1.) "There will be no more sea," none covering as now the face of the earth, and rendering so large a part of it uninhabitable by man. Hence it is probable, there was no external sea in the paradisiacal earth: none, until the great deep burst the barriers which were originally appointed for it; indeed there was not then that need of the ocean for navigation which there is now. For either (as the poet supposes)

Omnis tulit omnia tellus;

Every country produced whatever was requisite either for the necessity or comfort of its inhabitants: or man being then (as he will be again at the resurrection) equal to angels, was able to convey himself at his pleasure, to any given distance. Over and above that, those flaming messengers were always ready to minister to the heirs of salvation. But whether there was sea or not, there were rivers sufficient to water the earth and make it very plenteous. These answered all the purposes of covenience and pleasure:

By "liquid lapse of murmuring stream."

To which were added gentle, genial showers, with salutary mists and exhalations. But there were no

putrid lakes, no turbid or stagnating waters: but only such as

"Bore imprest
Fair Nature's image on their placid breast."

5. The element of air was then always serene, and always friendly to man. It contained no frightful meteor, no unwholesome vapours, no poisonous exhalations. There were no tempests, but only cool and gentle breezes,

Genitabilis aura Favoni;

Fanning both man and beast, and wafting the fragrant odours on their silent wings.

6. The sun, the fountain of fire, was situated at the most exact distance from the earth, so as to yield a sufficient quantity of heat, (neither too little nor too much,) to every part of it. God had not yet

"Bid his angels turn askance
This oblique globe."

There was therefore then no country that groaned under

"The rage of Arctos, and eternal frost."

There was no violent winter, or sultry summer; no extreme either of heat or cold. No soil was burnt up by the solar heat: none uninhabitable through the want of it. Thus earth, water, air, and fire all conspired together to the welfare and pleasure of man.

7. To the same purpose served the grateful vicissitude of light and darkness, day and night. For as the human body, though not liable to death or pain, yet needed continual sustenance by food, so although it was not liable to weariness, yet it needed continual reparation by sleep. By this the springs of the animal machine were wound up from time to time, and kept always fit for the pleasing labour, for which man was designed by his Creator. Accordingly, "the evening and the morning were the first day," before sin or pain was in the world. The first natural day had one part dark, for a season of repose; one part light for a season of labour. And even in paradise *Adam slept*, (chap. ii. 21.) before he sinned; sleep therefore belonged to innocent human nature. Yet I do not apprehend it can be inferred from hence, that there is either darkness or sleep in heaven. Surely there is no darkness in that city of God. Is it not expressly said, (Rev. xxii. 5.) "There shall be no night there?" Indeed they have no light from the sun; but "the Lord giveth them light." So it is all day in heaven, as it is all night in hell. On earth we have a mixture of both. Day and night succeed each other, till earth shall be turned to heaven. Neither can we at all credit the account given by the ancient poet, concerning sleep in heaven; although he allows *cloud-compelling Jove* to remain awake, while the inferior gods were sleeping. 'Tis pity therefore that our great poet should copy so servilely after the old heathen, as to tell us,

"Sleep had seal'd
All but th' unsleeping eyes of God himself."

Not so: they that "are before the throne of God serve him day and night, (speaking after the manner

of men,) in his temple," Rev. vii. 15. That is, without any interval. As wicked spirits are tormented day and night, without any intermission of their misery: so holy spirits enjoy God day and night, without any intermission of their happiness.

8. On the second day God encompassed the terraqueous globe with that noble appendage, the atmosphere, consisting chiefly of air, but replete with earthly particles of various kinds, and with huge volumes of water, sometimes invisible, sometimes visible, buoyed up by that ethereal fire, a particle of which cleaves to every particle of air. By this the water was divided into innumerable drops, which descending, watered the earth and made it very plenteous, without incommoding any of its inhabitants. For there were then no impetuous currents of air, no tempestuous winds; no furious hail, no torrents of rain, no rolling thunders or forky lightnings. One perennial spring was perpetually smiling over the whole surface of the earth.

9. On the third day God commanded all kind of vegetables to spring out of the earth: And then added thereto innumerable herbs, intermixed with flowers of all hues. To these were added shrubs of every kind, together with tall and stately trees, whether for shade, for timber or for fruit, in endless variety. Some of these were adapted to particular climates or particular exposures: while vegetables of more general use, (as wheat in particular,) were not confined to one country, but would flourish almost in every climate. But among all these there were no weeds, no useless plants, none that cumbered the ground. Much less were there any poisonous ones, tending to hurt any one creature: but every thing was salutary in its kind, suitable to the gracious design of its great Creator.

10. The Lord now created "The sun to rule the day, and the moon to govern the night." The sun was,

"Of this great world both eye and soul:"

The eye, making all things visible: distributing light to every part of the system, and thereby rejoicing both earth and sky: and the soul, the principle of all life, whether to vegetables or animals. Some of the uses of the moon we are acquainted with: her causing the ebbing and flowing of the sea, and influencing, in a greater or smaller degree, all the fluids in the terraqueous globe. And many other uses she may have, unknown to us, but known to the wise Creator. But it is certain, she had no hurtful, no unwholesome influence on any living creature: *he made the stars also:* both those that move round the sun, whether of the primary or secondary order: or those that being at a far greater distance, appear to us as fixt in the firmament of heaven. Whether *comets* are to be numbered among the stars, and whether they were parts of the original creation, is perhaps not so easy to determine, at least with certainty: as we have nothing but probable conjecture, either concerning their nature or their use. We know not, whether (as some ingenious men have imagined) they are ruined worlds; worlds that have undergone a general conflagration: or whether (as others not improbably suppose) they are immense reservoirs of fluids, appointed to revolve at certain seasons, and to supply the still decreasing moisture of the earth. But certain we are, that they did not either produce or portend any evil. They did not (as many have fancied since,)

"From their horrid hair
Shake pestilence and war."

11. The Lord God afterwards peopled the earth with animals of every kind. He first commanded the waters to bring forth abundantly; to bring forth creatures which as they inhabited a grosser element, so they were in general of a more stupid nature, endowed with fewer senses and less understanding than other animals. The bivalved shellfish in particular, seem to have no sense but that of feeling, unless perhaps a low measure of taste: so that they are but one degree above vegetables. And even the king of the water (a title which some give the whale, because of his enormous magnitude) though he has sight added to taste and feeling, does not appear to have an understanding proportioned to his bulk. Rather, he is inferior therein not only to most birds and beasts, but to the generality of even reptiles and insects. However, none of these then attempted to devour, or in any wise hurt one another. All were peaceful and quiet, as were the watery fields wherein they ranged at pleasure.

12. It seems the insect-kinds were at least one degree above the inhabitants of the waters. Almost all these too devour one another, and every other creature which they can conquer. Indeed, such is the miserably disordered state of the world at present, that innumerable creatures can no otherwise preserve their own lives, than by destroying others. But in the beginning it was not so. The paradisiacal earth afforded a sufficiency of food for all its inhabitants. So that none of them had any need or temptation to prey upon the other. The spider was then as harmless as the fly, and did not then lie in wait for blood. The weakest of them crept securely over

the earth, or spread their gilded wings in the air, that wavered in the breeze and glittered in the sun, without any to make them afraid. Mean time the reptiles of every kind were equally harmless, and more intelligent than they. Yea, one species of them *was more subtle*, or knowing, *than any of the* brute creation *which God had made*.

13. But in general, the birds, created to fly in the open firmament of heaven, appear to have been of an order far superior to either insects or reptiles; although still considerably inferior to beasts: (as we now restrain that word to quadrupeds, four-footed animals, which two hundred years ago included every kind of living creatures.) Many species of these are not only endowed with a large measure of natural understanding, but are likewise capable of much improvement by art, such as one would not readily conceive. But among all these there were no birds or beasts of prey: none that destroyed or molested another: but all the creatures breathed in their several kinds the benevolence of their great Creator.

14. Such was the state of the creation, according to the scanty ideas which we can now form concerning it, when its great Author, surveying the whole system at one view, pronounced it *very good!* Every part was exactly suited to the others, and conducive to the good of the whole. There was "a golden chain (to use the expression of Plato) let down from the throne of God," an exactly connected series of beings, from the highest to the lowest; from dead earth, through fossils, vegetables, animals, to man, created in the image of God, and designed to know, to love, and enjoy his Creator to all eternity.

1. Here is a firm foundation laid on which we may stand, and answer all the cavils of minute philoso-

phers; all the objections which *vain men* who *would be wise*, make to the goodness or wisdom of God in the creation. All these are grounded upon an entire mistake, namely, That the world is now in the same state it was at the beginning. And upon this supposition they plausibly build abundance of objections. But all these objections fall to the ground, when we observe this supposition cannot be admitted. The world at the beginning was in a totally different state, from that wherein we find it now. Object therefore whatever you please to the present state, either of the animate or inanimate creation, whether in general, or with regard to any particular instances; and the answer is ready, these are not now as they were in the beginning. Had you therefore heard that vain king of Castile, crying out with exquisite self-sufficiency, "If I had made the world, I would have made it better than God Almighty has made it;" you might have replied, "No: God Almighty, whether you know it or not, did not make it as it is now. He himself made it better, unspeakably better than it is at present. He made it without any blemish, yea, without any defect. He made no corruption, no destruction in the inanimate creation. He made not death in the animal creation, neither its harbingers; sin and pain. If you will not believe his own account, believe your brother heathen. It was only

Post ignem aetherea domo
Subductum——

That is, in plain English, After man in utter defiance of his Maker, had eaten of the tree of knowledge,

Macies & nova febrium
Terris incubuit cohors:

That a whole army of evils, totally new, totally unknown till then, broke in upon rebel man, and all other creatures, and overspread the face of the earth.

2. "Nay," (says a bold man,* who has since personated a Christian, and so well that many think him one!) "God is not to blame for either the natural or moral evils that are in the world. For he made it as well as he could: seeing evil must exist in the very nature of things." It must, *in the present nature* of things, supposing man to have rebelled against God. But evil did not exist at all in the original nature of things. It was no more the necessary result of matter, than it was the necessary result of spirit. All things then, without exception, were very good. And how should they be otherwise? There was no defect at all in the power of God, any more than in his goodness or wisdom. His goodness inclined him to make all things good: and this was executed by his power and wisdom. Let every sensible infidel then be ashamed of making such miserable excuses for his Creator! He needs none of us to make *apologies*, either for him or for his creation! *As for God*, his way is perfect; and such originally were all his works. And such they will be again, when "the Son of God shall have destroyed the works of the devil."

3. Upon this ground then, that *God made man upright*, and every creature perfect in its kind, but that man "found out to himself many inventions," of

* Mr. *S——y——s.*

happiness independent on God: and that by his apostacy from God, he threw not only himself, but likewise the whole creation, which was intimately connected with him, into disorder, misery, death: upon this ground I say, we do not find it difficult to

"Justify the ways of God with men."

For although he left man in the hand of his own counsel, to chuse good or evil, life or death: although he did not take away the liberty he had given him, but suffered him to chuse death, in consequence of which the whole creation now groaneth together: yet when we consider all the evils introduced into the creation may work together for our good: yea, may work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: we may well praise God for permitting these temporary evils, in order to our eternal good; yea, we may well cry out, *O the depth both of* the wisdom and the goodness of God! He hath done all things well. Glory be unto God, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!

ON THE FALL OF MAN.

A

SERMON

ON GENESIS iii. 19.

Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.

1. WHY is there pain in the world? Seeing God is "loving to every man, and his mercy is over all his works?" Because there is sin: had there been no sin, there would have been no pain. But pain, (supposing God to be just,) is the necessary effect of sin. But why is there sin in the world? Because man was created in the image of God: because he is not mere matter, a clod of earth, a lump of clay, without sense or understanding, but a spirit, like his Creator: a being endued not only with sense and understanding, but also with a will exerting itself in various affections. To crown all the rest, he was endued with liberty, a power of directing his own affections and actions, a capacity of determining himself, or of chusing good or evil. Indeed had not man been endued with this, all the rest would have been of no use. Had he not been a free, as well as an intelligent being, his understanding would have been as incapable of holiness, or any kind of virtue, as a tree or a block of marble. And having this power, a power of chusing good or evil, he chose the latter: he chose evil. Thus "sin entered into the world," and pain of every kind, preparatory to *death*.

2. But this plain, simple account of the origin of evil, whether natural or moral, all the wisdom of man could not discover, till it pleased God to reveal it to the world. Till then man was a mere enigma to himself, a riddle which none but God could solve. And in how full and satisfactory a manner has he solved it in this chapter? In such a manner as does

not indeed serve to gratify vain curiosity, but as is abundantly sufficient to answer a nobler end: to

"Justify the ways of God with men."

To this great end, I would, first, briefly consider the preceding part of this chapter, and then, secondly, more particularly weigh the solemn words which have been already recited.

I. 1. In the first place, let us briefly consider the preceding part of this chapter. "Now the serpent was more subtle, (or intelligent,) than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made," ver. 1. Endued with more understanding than any other animal in the brute creation. Indeed there is no improbability in the conjecture of an ingenious man,* That the serpent was endued with reason, which is now the property of man. And this accounts for a circumstance, which on any other supposition would be utterly unintelligible. How comes Eve not to be surprised, yea, startled and affrighted, at hearing the serpent speak and reason? unless she knew that reason, and speech in consequence of it, were the original properties of the serpent? Hence, without showing any surprise, she immediately enters into conversation with him. "And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" See how he, who was a liar from the beginning, mixes truth and falsehood together? Perhaps on purpose that she might be the more inclined to speak, in order to clear God of the unjust charge. Accordingly the woman "said unto the serpent, (ver. 2, 3.) We may eat of the fruit of the

* The late Dr. Nicholas Robinson.

trees of the garden : but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it : neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." Thus far she appeared to have been clear of blame. But how long did she continue so ? " And the serpent said unto the woman, Surely ye shall not die. For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." ver. 4. 5. Here sin began, namely, unbelief. " The woman was deceived," says the Apostle. She believed a lie : she gave more credit to the word of the devil than to the word of God. And unbelief brought forth actual sin. " When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat," and so completed her sin. But the man, as the Apostle observes, *was not deceived.* How then came he to join in the transgression ? " She gave unto her husband, and he did eat." He sinned with his eyes open. He rebelled against his Creator, as is highly probable,

" Not by stronger reason mov'd,
But fondly overcome with female charms."

And if this was the case, there is no absurdity in the assertion of a great man, " That Adam sinned in his heart, before he sinned outwardly, before he ate of the forbidden fruit," namely, by inward idolatry, by loving the creature more than the Creator.

2. Immediately pain followed sin. When he lost his innocence, he lost his happiness. He painfully feared that God, in the love of whom his supreme happiness before consisted. " He said, (ver. 10.) I heard

thy voice in the garden; and I was afraid." He fled from Him, who was till then his desire, and glory, and joy. "He hid himself from the presence of the Lord God, among the trees of the garden!" Hid himself! What, from the all-seeing eye? The eye which, with one glance, pervades heaven and earth? See how his understanding likewise was impaired? What amazing folly was this! Such as one would imagine very few even of his posterity could have fallen into. So dreadfully was his *foolish heart darkened* by sin, and guilt, and sorrow, and fear! His innocence was lost; and at the same time, his happiness and his wisdom! Here is the clear intelligible answer to that question, How came evil into the world?

3. One cannot but observe throughout this whole narration, the inexpressible tenderness and lenity of the Almighty Creator, from whom they had revolted; the sovereign against whom they had rebelled. "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" Thus graciously calling him to return, who would otherwise have eternally fled from God. "And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked." Still here is no acknowledgment of his fault, no humiliation for it. But with what astonishing tenderness does God lead him to make that acknowledgment? "And he said, who told thee that thou wast naked?" How camest thou to make this discovery? "Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" *And the man said*, (still unhumbled, yea, indirectly throwing the blame upon God himself,) "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God," still endeavouring to bring them to repentance, "said

unto the woman. What is this that thou hast done? v. 13. "And the woman said, (nakedly declaring the thing as it was,) The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, (to testify his utter abhorrence of sin, by a lasting monument of his displeasure, in punishing the creature that had been barely the instrument of it,) Thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field.—And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Thus in the midst of judgment hath God remembered mercy, from the beginning of the world! Connecting the grand promise of salvation with the very sentence of condemnation.

4. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, (and, or in) thy conception, in sorrow (or pain) thou shalt bring forth children," yea, above any other creature under heaven: which original curse we see, is entailed on her latest posterity. "And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." It seems the latter part of this sentence is explanatory of the former. Was there till now any other inferiority in the woman to the man, than that which we may conceive in one angel to another? "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake.—Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee;" useless, yea, and hurtful productions: whereas nothing calculated to hurt or give pain, had at first any place in the creation. "And thou shalt eat the herb of the field," coarse and vile, compared to the delicious fruit of Paradise. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto

the ground; for out of it wast thou taken. For dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

II. 1. Let us now in the second place, weigh these solemn words in a more particular manner. *Dust thou art.* But how fearfully and wonderfully wrought into innumerable fibres, nerves, membranes, muscles, arteries, veins, vessels of various kinds! And how amazingly is this dust connected with water, with enclosed, circulating fluids, diversified a thousand ways, by a thousand tubes and strainers! Yea, and how wonderfully is air impacted into every part, solid or fluid, of the animal machine! Air, not elastic, which would tear the machine in pieces, but as fixed as water under the pole! But all this would not avail, were not ethereal fire intimately mixt both with this earth, air, and water. And all these elements were mingled together in the most exact proportion: so that while the body is in health, no one of them predominates in the least degree over the others.

2. Such was man, with regard to his coporeal part, as he came out of the hands of his Maker. But since he sinned, he is not only dust, but mortal, corruptible dust. And by sad experience we find, that this "corruptible body presses down the soul." It very frequently hinders the soul in its operations, and at best serves it very imperfectly. Yet the soul cannot dispense with its service, imperfect as it is. For an imbodied spirit cannot form one thought, but by the mediation of its bodily organs. For thinking is not (in this case) the act of a pure spirit: but the act of a spirit connected with a body, and playing upon a set of material keys. It cannot possibly therefore make any better music than the nature and state of its instruments allow it. Hence every disorder of the body, especially of the parts more immediately sub-

servient to thinking, lays an almost insuperable bar in the way of its thinking justly. Hence the maxim received in all ages, *Humanum est errare & nescire.* Not ignorance alone, (that belongs more or less to every creature in heaven and earth: seeing none is omniscient, none knoweth all things, save the *Creator*) but error is entailed on every child of man. Mistake as well as ignorance is, in our present state, inseparable from humanity. Every child of man is in a thousand mistakes, and is liable to fresh mistakes every moment. And a mistake in judgment may occasion a mistake in practice, yea, naturally leads thereto. I mistake, and possibly cannot avoid mistaking the character of this or that man. I suppose him to be what he is not; to be better or worse than he really is. Upon this wrong supposition I behave wrong to him, that is, more or less affectionately than he deserves. And by the mistake which is occasioned by the defect of my bodily organs, I am naturally led so to do. Such is the present condition of human nature: of a mind dependent on a mortal body. Such is the state entailed on all human spirits, while connected with flesh and blood.

3. "And unto dust thou shalt return." How admirably well has the wise Creator secured the execution of this sentence on all the offspring of Adam! It is true, he was pleased to make one exception, from this general rule, in a very early age of the world, in favour of an eminently righteous man. So we read, (Gen. v. 22, 24.) After Enoch had "walked with God three hundred years, he was not: for God took him." He exempted him from the sentence passed upon all flesh, and took him alive into heaven. Many ages after, he was pleased to make a second exception, ordering the prophet Elijah to be taken up into heaven in a chariot of fire: very pro-

bably by a convoy of angels, assuming that appearance. And it is not unlikely that he saw good to make a third exception, in the person of the beloved disciple. There is transmitted to us a particular account of the apostle John's old age. But we have not any account of his death, and not the least intimation concerning it. Hence we may reasonably suppose, that he did not die, but that after he had finished his course, and *walked with God* for about an hundred years, *the Lord took him*, as he did *Enoch:* not in so open and conspicuous a manner as he did the prophet Elijah.

4. But setting these rare or three instances aside, who has been able in the course of near six thousand years, to evade the execution of this sentence, passed on Adam and all his posterity? Be men ever so great masters of the art of healing, can they prevent or heal the gradual decays of nature? Can all their boasted skill heal old age, or hinder dust from returning to dust? Nay, who among the greatest masters of medicine has been able to add a century to his own years? Yea, or to protract his own life any considerable space beyond the common period? The days of man, for above three thousand years, from the time of Moses at least, have been fixed, by a middling computation, at threescore years and ten. How few are there that attain to fourscore years? Perhaps hardly one in five hundred. So little does the art of man avail against the appointment of God.

5. God has indeed provided for the execution of his own decree, in the very principles of our nature. It is well known, the human body when it comes into the world, consists of innumerable membranes exquisitely thin, that are filled with circulating fluids, to which the solid parts bear a very small proportion. Into the tubes, composed of these membranes,

nourishment must be continually infused: otherwise life cannot continue, but will come to an end almost as soon as it is begun. And suppose this nourishment to be liquid, which as it flows through those fine canals, continually enlarges them in all their dimensions, yet it contains innumerable solid particles, which continually adhere to the inner surface of the vessels through which they flow: so that in the same proportion as any vessel is enlarged, it is stiffened also. Thus the body grows firmer, as it grows larger, from infancy to manhood. In twenty, five and twenty, or thirty years, it attains its full measure of firmness. Every part of the body is then stiffened to its full degree: as much earth adhering to all the vessels, as gives the solidity they severally need to the nerves, arteries, veins, muscles, in order to exercise their functions in the most perfect manner. For twenty, or it may be, thirty years following, although more and more particles of earth continually adhere to the inner surface of every vessel in the body, yet the stiffness caused thereby is hardly observable, and occasions little inconvenience. But after sixty years, (more or less, according to the natural constitution, and a thousand accidental circumstances) the change is easily perceived, even at the surface of the body. Wrinkles shew the proportion of fluids to be lessened, as does also the dryness of the skin, through a diminution of the blood and juices which before moistened, and kept it smooth and soft. The extremities of the body grow cold, not only as they are remote from the centre of motion, but as the smaller vessels are filled up, and can no longer admit the circulating fluid. As age increases, fewer and fewer of the vessels are pervious, and capable of transmitting the vital stream; except the larger ones, most of which are lodged within the trunk of

the body. In extreme old age, the arteries themselves, the grand instruments of circulation, by the continual acquisition of earth, become hard and as it were bony, till having lost the power of contracting themselves, they can no longer propel the blood, even through the largest channels, in consequence of which death naturally ensues. Thus are the seeds of death sown in our very nature! Thus from the very hour when we first appear on the stage of life, we are travelling toward death: we are preparing, whether we will or no, to return to the dust from whence we came.

6. Let us now take a short review of the whole, as it is delivered with inimitable simplicity, which an unprejudiced person might even from hence infer to be the word of God. In that period of duration which he saw to be most proper, (of which he alone could be the judge, whose eye views the whole possibility of things from everlasting to everlasting) the Almighty, rising in the greatness of his strength, went forth to create the universe. *In the beginning he created*, made out of nothing, *the matter of the heavens and the earth.* (So Mr. Hutchinson observes, the original words properly signify.) Then *the spirit or breath from the Lord*, that is the air, *moved upon the face of the waters.* Here were earth, water, air, three of the elements, or component parts of the lower world. *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.* By his omnific word, light, that is, fire, the fourth element sprang into being. Out of these variously modified and proportion to each other, He composed the whole. *The earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed, and the tree yielding fruit after its kind:* and then the various tribes of animals, to inhabit the waters, the air, and the earth. But the very heathen could observe,

Sanctius his animal mentisq; capacius altae Deerat Adhuc!———

There was still wanting a creature of a higher rank, capable of wisdom and holiness. *Natus homo est. So God created man in the image of God, in the image of God created he him!* Mark the emphatical repetition! God did not make him mere matter, a piece of senseless, unintelligent clay: but a spirit like himself, (although clothed with a material vehicle.) As such, he was endued with understanding, with a will, including various affections, and with liberty, a power of using them in a right or wrong manner, of chusing good or evil. Otherwise neither his understanding nor his will would have been to any purpose; for he must have been as incapable of virtue or holiness, as the stock of a tree. Adam in whom all mankind were then contained, freely preferred evil to good. He chose to do his own will rather than the will of his Creator. He *was not deceived*, but knowingly and deliberately rebelled against his Father and his King. In that moment he lost the moral image of God, and in part, the natural. He commenced unholy, foolish, and unhappy, And *in Adam all died.* He entitled all his posterity, to error, guilt, sorrow, fear, pain, diseases, and death.

7. How exactly does matter of fact, do all things round us, even the face of the whole world agree with this account? Open your eyes! Look round you! See darkness that may be felt; see ignorance and error; see vice in ten thousand forms: see consciousness of guilt, fear, sorrow, shame, remorse, covering the face of the earth! See misery, the daughter of sin. See on every side sickness and pain, inhabitants of every nation under heaven, driving on the poor helpless sons of men, in every age, to the gates of

death! So they have done, well nigh from the beginning of the world. So they will do, till the consummation of all things.

8. But can the Creator despise the work of his own hands? Surely that is impossible. Hath he not then, seeing he alone is able, provided a remedy for all these evils! Yea, verily he hath! And a sufficient remedy, every way adequate to the disease. He hath fulfilled his word: he hath given "the seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head. God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish but have everlasting life." Here is a remedy provided for all our guilt: he "bore all our sins in his body on the tree." And "if any one have sinned, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And here is a remedy for all our disease, all the corruption of our nature. For God *hath also*, through the intercession of his Son, *given us his Holy Spirit*, to *renew* us both *in knowledge*, in his natural image, *opening the eyes of our understanding*, *and enlightening* us with all such knowledge as is requisite to our pleasing God: and also in his moral image, namely, *righteousness and true holiness*. And supposing this is done, we know that *all things will work together for our good*. We know, by happy experience, that all natural evils change their nature and turn to good: that sorrow, sickness, pain, will all prove medicines, to heal our spiritual sickness. They will all be *to our profit*; will all tend to our unspeakable advantage: making us more largely *partakers of his holiness*, while we remain on earth, adding so many stars to that crown, which is reserved in heaven for us.

9. Behold then both the justice and mercy of God! His justice in punishing sin, the sin of him in whose

loins we were then all contained, on Adam and his whole posterity! And his mercy, in providing an universal remedy for an universal evil! In appointing the second Adam to die for all, who had died in the first: that "As in Adam all died, so in Christ all might be made alive:" that "as by one man's offence, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, the free gift might come upon all, unto justification of life:" Justification of life, as being connected with the New Birth, the beginning of spiritual life, which leads us through the life of holiness, to life eternal, to glory.

10. And it should be particularty observed, that "where sin abounded, grace does much more abound. For not as the condemnation, so is the free gift," but we may gain infinitely more than we have lost. We may now attain both higher degrees of holiness, and higher degrees of glory, that it would have been possible for us to attain, if Adam had not sinned, if the son of God had not died. Consequently that amazing instance of the love of God to man had never existed, which has in all ages excited the highest joy, and love, and gratitude from his children. We might have loved God the Creator: God the Preserver: God the Governor. But there would have been no place for love to God the Redeemer: this could have had no being. The highest glory and joy of saints on earth and saints in heaven, Christ crucified, had been wanting. We could not then have praised him, that "thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he emptied himself, took upon him the form of a servant, and was obedient to death, even the death of the cross!" This is now the noblest theme of all the children of God on earth. Yea, we need not scruple to affirm,

even of angels, and archangels, and all the company of heaven.

" Hallelujah they cry
To the King of the sky,
To the great, everlasting I AM,
To the Lamb that was slain,
And liveth again,
Halellujah to God and the Lamb.

On Predestination.

A

SERMON

On ROMANS viii. 29, 30.

Romans viii. 29, 30.

Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son:—whom he did predestinate, them he also called: whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

1. "OUR beloved brother Paul, (says St. Peter,*) according to the wisdom given to him, hath written unto you: as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood: which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction."

2. It is not improbable, that among those things spoken by St. Paul, which are "hard to be understood," the apostle Peter might place what he speaks on this subject, in the eighth and ninth chapters of his epistle to the Romans. And it is certain, not only the *unlearned*, but many of the most learned men in the world, and not the *unstable* only, but many who seemed to be well established in the truths of the gospel, have for several centuries *wrested* these passages "to their own destruction."

3. "Hard to be understood" we may well allow them to be, when we consider, how men of the strongest understanding, improved by all the advantages of education, have continually differed in judgment concerning them. And this very consideration, that there is so wide a difference upon the

* 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.

head, between men of the greatest learning, sense and piety, one might imagine would make all who now speak upon the subject, exceedingly wary and self-diffident. But I know not how it is, that just the reverse is observed, in every part of the christian world. No writers upon earth appear more positive, than those who write on this difficult subject. Nay, the same men, who writing on any other subject, are remarkably modest and humble, on this alone lay aside all self-distrust,

"And speak *ex cathedra* infallible."

This is peculiarly observable of almost all those, who assert the absolute decrees. But surely, it is possible to avoid this: whatever we propose, may be proposed with modesty, and with deference to those wise and good men, who are of a contrary opinion. And the rather, because so much has been said already, on every part of the question, so many volumes have been written, that it is scarce possible to say any thing which has not been said before. All I would offer, at present, not to the lovers of contention, but to men of piety and candour, are a few short hints, which perhaps may cast some light on the text above recited.

4. The more frequently and carefully I have considered it, the more I have been inclined to think, that the apostle is not here (as many have supposed) describing a chain of causes and effects: (this does not seem to have entered into his heart:) but simply shewing *the method in which God works; the order* in which the several branches of salvation, constantly follow each other. And this, I apprehend, will be clear to any serious and impartial enquirer, surveying the work of God either forward or backward:

either from the beginning to the end, or from the end to the beginning.

5. And first, let us look forward on the whole work of God in the salvation of man, considering it from the beginning, the first point, till it terminates in glory. The first point is, The foreknowledge of God. God *foreknew* those in every nation, who would believe, from the beginning of the world, to the consummation of all things. But in order to throw light upon this dark question, it should be well observed, that when we speak of God's *foreknowledge*, we do not speak according to the nature of things, but after the manner of men. For if we speak properly, there is no such thing, as either *foreknowledge* or *after-knowledge* in God. All time, or rather all eternity (for time is only that small fragment of eternity, which is allotted to the children of men) being present to him at once, he does not know one thing before another, or one thing after another: but sees all things in one point of view, from everlasting to everlasting. As all time, with every thing that exists therein, is present with him at once, so he sees at once, whatever was, is, or will be to the end of time. But observe: We must not think, they are, because he knows them. No; he knows them, because they are. Just as I (if one may be allowed to compare the things of men with the deep things of God) now know, the sun shines. Yet the sun does not shine, because I know it: but I know it, because he shines. My knowledge *supposes* the sun to shine; but does not in any wise *cause* it. In like manner, God knows, that man sins: for he knows all things. Yet we do not sin, because he knows it: but he knows it, because we sin. And his knowledge *supposes* our sin, but does not in any wise cause it. In a word, God looking on all ages

from the creation to the consummation as a moment, and seeing at once whatever is in the hearts of all the children of men, knows every one that does or does not believe in every age or nation. Yet what he knows, whether faith or unbelief, is in no wise caused by his knowledge. Men are as free in believing, or not believing, as if he did not know it at all.

6. Indeed if man were not free, he could not be accountable, either for his thoughts, words, or actions. If he were not free, he would not be capable, either of reward or punishment. He would be incapable either of virtue or vice, of being either morally good or bad. If he had no more freedom than the sun, the moon, or the stars, he would be no more accountable than them. On supposition that he had no more freedom than them, the stones of the earth would be as capable of reward, and as liable to punishment as man: one would be as accountable as the other. Yea, and it would be as absurd to ascribe either virtue or vice to him, as to ascribe it to the stock of a tree.

7. But to proceed. "Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son." This is the second step, (to speak after the manner of men: for in fact, there is nothing *before or after* in God.) In other words, God decrees, from everlasting to everlasting, that all who believe in the Son of his love, shall be conformed to his image, shall be saved from all inward and outward sin, into all inward and outward holiness. Accordingly it is a plain, undeniable fact; all who truly believe in the name of the Son of God, do now *receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls:* and this in virtue of the unchangeable, irreversible, irresistible decree of God, "He that be-

lieveth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

8. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called." This is the third step: (still remembering that we speak after the manner of men.) To express it a little more largely. According to his fixed decree, that believers shall be saved, those whom he foreknows as such, he calls both outwardly and inwardly: outwardly by the word of his grace, and inwardly by his Spirit. This inward application of his word to the heart, seems to be what some term *effectual calling*. And it implies, the calling them children of God, the *accepting* them *in the Beloved;* the justifying them "freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ."

9. "Whom he called, those he justified." This is the fourth step. It is generally allowed, that the word *justified* here is taken in a peculiar sense; that it means, it made them just or righteous. He executed his decree, "conforming them to the image of his Son," or, (as we usually speak) "sanctified them."

10. It remains, "whom he justified, those he glorified." This is the last step. Having made them "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," he gives them "the kingdom which was prepared for them before the world began." This is the order, wherein "according to the counsel of his will" [the plan he has laid down from eternity] he saves those whom he foreknew, the true believers in every place and generation.

11. The same great work of salvation by faith, according to the foreknowledge and decree of God, may appear in a still clearer light, if we view it backward, from the end to the beginning. Suppose then you stood with the "great multitude which no man can number, out of every nation, and tongue, and

kindred, and people, who give praise unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever :" you would not find one among them all, that were entered into glory, who was not a witness of that great truth, " Without holiness no man shall see the Lord :" not one of all that innumerable company, who was not *sanctified* before he was *glorified.* By holiness he was prepared for glory, according to the invariable will of the Lord, that the crown purchased by the blood of his Son, should be given to none but those who are renewed by his Spirit. He is become " the author of eternal salvation only to them that obey him :" that obey him inwardly and outwardly ; that are holy in heart, and holy in all manner of conversation.

12. And could you take a view of all those upon earth, who are now *sanctified*, you would find, not one of these had been sanctified till after he was called. He was first called, not only with an outward call, by the word and the messengers of God, but likewise with an inward call, by his Spirit applying his word, enabling him to believe in the only begotten Son of God, and bearing testimony with his spirit, that he was a child of God. And it was by this very means they were all sanctified. It was by a sense of the love of God shed abroad in his heart, that every one of them was enabled to love God. Loving God, he loved his neighbour as himself, and had power to walk in all his commandments blameless. This is a rule which admits of no exception. God *calls* a sinner his own, that is, justifies him before he sanctifies. And by this very thing, the consciousness of his favour, he works in him that grateful, filial affection, from which spring every good temper, and word, and work.

13. And who are they that are thus *called* of God,

but those whom he had before *predestinated*, or decreed to conform to the image of his Son?" This decree (still speaking after the manner of men) precedes every man's calling. Every believer was predestinated before he was called. For God calls none, but according to the counsel of his will," according to this προθεσις or plan of acting, which he had laid down before the foundation of the world.

14. Once more. As all that are called were predestinated, so all whom God has predestinated he *foreknew*. He knew, he saw them as believers, and as such predestinated them to salvation, according to his eternal decree. "He that believeth shall be saved." Thus we see the whole process of the work of God, from the end to the beginning. Who are glorified? None but those who were first sanctified. Who are sanctified? None but those who were first justified. Who are justified? None but those who were first predestinated. Who are predestinated? None but those whom God foreknew as believers. Thus the purpose and work of God stand unshaken as the pillars of heaven, "He that believeth shall be saved: he that believeth not shall be damned." And thus God is clear from the blood of all men: since whoever perishes, perishes by his own act and deed. "They will not come unto me," says the Saviour of men: "and there is no salvation in any other." They will not believe: and there is no other way either to present or eternal salvation. Therefore their blood is upon their own head: and God is still justified in his saying, that he "willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of his truth."

15. The sum of all is this. The Almighty, allwise God sees and knows from everlasting to everlasting, all that is, that was, and that is to come,

through one eternal now. With him nothing is either past or future, but all things equally present. He has therefore, if we speak according to the truth of things, no foreknowledge, no after-knowledge. This would be ill consistent with the Apostle's words, "With him is no variableness or shadow of turning:" and with the account he gives of himself by the prophet, *I the Lord change not.* Yet when he speaks to us, knowing whereof we are made, knowing the scantiness of our understanding, he lets himself down to our capacity, and speaks of himself after the manner of men. Thus in condescension to our weakness, he speaks of his own *purpose*, *counsel*, *plan*, *foreknowledge*. Not that God has any need of *counsel*, of *purpose*, or of *planning* his work beforehand. Far be it from us to impute these to the Most High; to measure him by ourselves! It is merely in compassion to us, that he speaks thus of himself as *foreknowing* the things in heaven or earth, and as *predestinating* or *foreordaining* them. But can we possibly imagine, that these expressions are to be taken literally? To one who was so gross in his conceptions, might he not say, "Thinkest thou I am such an one as thyself?" Not so. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than thy ways." I know, decree, work, in such a manner, as it is not possible for thee to conceive. But to give thee some faint, glimmering knowledge of my ways, I use the language of men, and suit myself to thy apprehensions, in this thy infant state of existence.

16. What is it then that we learn from this whole account? It is this and no more. 1. God knows all believers, 2. Wills that they should be saved from sin, 3. To that end justifies them, 4. Sanctifies, and 5. Takes them to glory.

O that men would praise the Lord for this his goodness! And that they would be content with this plain account of it, and not endeavour to wade into those mysteries, which are too deep for angels to fathom!

GOD'S LOVE TO FALLEN MAN.

A

SERMON

ON ROMANS v. 15.

Not as the offence, so also is the free gift.

1. HOW exceeding common, and how bitter is the outcry against our first parent, for the mischief which he not only brought upon himself, but entailed upon his latest posterity. It was by his wilful rebellion against God, "That sin entered into the world." "By one man's disobedience," as the Apostle observes, *the many*, οἱ πολλοὶ, as many as were then in the loins of their forefather, *were made*, or constituted *sinners:* not only deprived of the favour of God, but also of his image; of all virtue, righteousness, and true holiness, and sunk partly into the image of the devil, in pride, malice, and all other diabolical tempers, partly into the image of the brute, being fallen under the dominion of brutal passions and grovelling appetites. Hence also death entered into the world, with all his forerunners and attendants; pain, sickness, and a whole train of uneasy as well as unholy passions and tempers.

2. "For all this we may thank Adam," has echoed down from generation to generation. The selfsame charge has been repeated in every age, and every nation, where the oracles of God are known, in which alone this grand and important event has been discovered to the children of men. Has not *your* heart, and probably your lips too, joined in the general charge? How few are there of those who believe the scriptural relation of the fall of man, that have not entertained the same thought concerning our first parent? Severely condemning him, that

through wilful disobedience to the sole command of his Creator,

"Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

3. Nay, it were well if the charge rested here: but it is certain, it does not. It cannot be denied, that it frequently glances from Adam to his Creator. Have not thousands, even of those that are called Christians, taken the liberty to call his mercy, if not his justice also, into question, on this very account? Some indeed have done this, a little more modestly, in an oblique and indirect manner. But others have thrown aside the mask, and asked, "Did not God foresee that Adam would abuse his liberty? And did he not know the baneful consequences which this must naturally have on all his posterity? And why then did he permit that disobedience? Was it not easy for the Almighty to have prevented it?" He certainly did foresee the whole. This cannot be denied. For "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." (Rather from all eternity, as the words ἀπ' αἰῶνός properly signify.) And it was undoubtedly in his power to prevent it: for he hath all power both in heaven and earth. But it was known to him at the same time, that it was best upon the whole not to prevent it. He knew, that "not as the transgression, so the free gift:" that the evil resulting from the former, was not as the good resulting from the latter, not worthy to be compared with it. He saw that to permit the fall of the first man, was far best for mankind in general; that abundantly more good than evil would accrue to the posterity of Adam by his fall; that if *sin abounded* thereby over all the earth, yet grace "would much more abound;" yea, and that to every individual of the human race, unless it was his own choice.

4. It is exceeding strange that hardly any thing has been written, or at least published, on this subject: nay, that it has been so little weighed or understood, by the generality of Christians: especially considering that it is not a matter of mere curiosity, but a truth of the deepest importance; it being impossible on any other principle,

"To assert a gracious Providence,
And justify the ways of God with men:"

And considering withal, how plain this important truth is, to all sensible and candid inquirers. May the Lover of men open the eyes of our understanding to perceive clearly, that by the fall of Adam mankind in general have gained a capacity,

First of being more holy on earth, and

Secondly, of being more happy in heaven, than otherwise they could have been.

1. And, first, mankind in general have gained by the fall of Adam, a capacity of attaining more holiness on earth, than it would have been possible for them to attain, if Adam had not fallen. For if Adam had not fallen, Christ had not died.—Nothing can be more clear than this: nothing more undeniable: the more thoroughly we consider the point, the more deeply shall we be convinced of it. Unless all the partakers of human nature had received that deadly wound in Adam, it would not have been needful for the Son of God to take our nature upon him. Do you not see, that this was the very ground of his coming into the world? "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And thus death passed upon all, (through him) in whom all men sinned," Rom. v. 12. Was it not

to remedy this very thing, that "the Word was made flesh? that as in Adam all died, so in Christ all might be made alive?" Unless then, *many* had been made sinners by the disobedience of one, by the obedience of one *many* would not have been *made righteous*, ver. 18. So there would have been no room for that amazing display of the Son of God's love to mankind. There would have been no occasion for his "being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." It could not then have been said, to the astonishment of all the hosts of heaven, "God so loved the world," yea, the ungodly world, which had no thought or desire of returning to him, "that he gave his Son," out of his bosom, his only-begotten Son, "to the end that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." Neither could we then have said, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself:" or that he "made him to be sin, (that is, a sin offering) for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him." There would have been no such occasion for such "an Advocate with the Father, as Jesus Christ the righteous:" neither for his appearing "at the right hand of God, to make intercession for us."

2. What is the necessary consequence of this? It is this, there could then have been no such thing as faith in God *thus loving the world*, giving his only Son for us men and for our salvation. There could have been no such thing as faith in the Son of God, "as loving us and giving himself for us." There could have been no faith in the Spirit of God, as renewing the image of God in our hearts, as raising us from the death of sin, unto the life of righteousness. Indeed the whole privilege of justification by faith could have had no existence: there could have been

no redemption in the blood of Christ: neither could Christ have been "made of God unto us, either wisdom, righteousness, sanctification or redemption."

3. And the same grand blank which was in our faith, must likewise have been in our love. We might have loved the Author of our being, the Father of angels and men, as our Creator and Preserver: we might have said, "O Lord, our Governor, how excellent is thy name in all the earth." But we could not have loved him under the nearest and dearest relation, as delivering up his Son for us all." We might have loved the Son of God, as being "the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person:" (although this ground seems to belong rather to the inhabitants of heaven than earth.) But we could not have loved him as "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree," and "by that one oblation of himself once offered, making a full oblation, sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." We could not have been "made conformable to his death," nor have "known the power of his resurrection." We could not have loved the Holy Ghost, as revealing to us the Father and the Son, as opening the eyes of our understanding, bringing us out of darkness into his marvellous light, renewing the image of God in our soul, and sealing us unto the day of redemption. So that in truth, what is now "in the sight of God, even the Father," not of fallible men, "pure religion and undefiled," would then have had no being: inasmuch as it wholly depends on those grand principles, "By grace ye are saved through faith: and Jesus Christ is of God made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption."

4. We see then what unspeakable advantage we derive from the fall of our first parent, with regard

to faith: faith both in God the Father, who spared not his own Son, his only Son, but "wounded him for our transgressions, and bruised him for our iniquities:" and in God the Son, who poured out his soul for us transgressors, and washed us in his own blood. We see what advantage we derive therefrom, with regard to the love of God, both of God the Father and God the Son. The chief ground of this love, as long as we remain in the body, is plainly declared by the Apostle, "We love him, because he first loved us." But the greatest instance of his love had never been given, if Adam had not fallen.

5. And as our faith both in God the Father and the Son, receives an unspeakable increase, if not its very being from this grand event, as does also our love both of the Father and the Son: so does the love of our neighbour also, our benevolence to all mankind: which cannot but increase in the same proportion with our faith and love of God. For who does not apprehend the force of that inference drawn by the loving Apostle, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." If God so loved us—observe, the stress of the argument lies on this very point; *so loved us!* as to deliver up his only Son, to die a cursed death for our salvation. "Beloved, what manner of love is this, wherewith God hath loved us?" So as to give his *only Son!* In glory equal with the Father; in majesty coeternal? What manner of love is this, wherewith the only-begotten Son of God hath loved us! as to *empty himself*, as far as possible, of his eternal Godhead! as to devest himself of that glory, which he had with the Father before the world began! as to "take upon him the form of a servant, being found in fashion as a man!" And then to humble himself still farther, "being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!" If God so

loved us, how ought we to love one another? But this motive to brotherly love had been totally wanting, if Adam had not fallen. Consequently we could not then have loved one another in so high a degree as we may now. Nor could there have been that height and depth in the command of our blessed Lord, "As I have loved you so love one another."

6. Such gainers may we be by Adam's fall, with regard both to the love of God and of our neighbour. But there is another grand point, which though little adverted to, deserves our deepest consideration. By that one act of our first parent, not only "sin entered into the world," but pain also, and was alike entailed on his whole posterity. And herein appeared, not only the justice, but the unspeakable goodness of God! For how much good does he continually bring out of this evil! How much holiness and happiness out of pain!

7. How innumerable are the benefits which God conveys to the children of men through the channel of sufferings? So that it might well be said, "What are termed afflictions in the language of men, are in the language of God styled blessings." Indeed, had there been no suffering in the world, a considerable part of religion, yea, and in some respects, the most excellent part, could have had no place therein: since the very existence of it depends on our suffering; so that had there been no pain, it could have had no being. Upon this foundation, even our suffering, it is evident all our passive graces are built: yea, the noblest of all Christian graces, love *enduring all things*. Here is the ground for resignation to God enabling us to say from the heart, in every trying hour, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good. Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" And what a glorious specta-

cle is this? Did it not constrain even a heathen to cry out, "*Ecce spectaculum Deo dignum!* See a sight worthy of God: A good man struggling with adversity, and superior to it." Here is the ground for confidence in God, both with regard to what we feel, and with regard to what we should fear, were it not that our soul is calmly stayed on him. What room could there be for trust in God, if there was no such thing as pain or danger? Who might not say then, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" It is by sufferings that our faith is tried, and therefore made more acceptable to God. It is in the day of trouble that we have occasion to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." And this is well-pleasing to God, that we should own him in the face of danger; in defiance of sorrow, sickness, pain, or death.

8. Again. Had there been neither natural nor moral evil in the world, what must have become of patience, meekness, long-suffering? It is manifest they could have had no being; seeing all these have evil for their object. If therefore evil had never entered into the world, neither could these have had any place in it. For who could have "returned good for evil," had there been no evil-doer in the universe? How had it been possible, on that supposition, to "overcome evil with good?" Will you say, "But all these graces might have been divinely infused into the hearts of men." Undoubtedly they might: but if they had, there would have been no use or exercise for them. Whereas in the present state of things, we can never long want occasion to exercise them. And the more they are exercised, the more all our graces are strenghtened and increased. And in the same proportion as our resignation, our confidence in God, our patience and fortitude,

our meekness and long-suffering, together with our faith and love of God and man increase, must our happiness increase, even in the present world.

9. Yet again. As God's permission of Adam's fall gave all his posterity a thousand opportunities of *suffering*, and thereby of exercising all those passive graces, which increase both their holiness and happiness: so it gives them opportunities of *doing good* in numberless instances, of exercising themselves in various good works, which otherwise could have had no being. And what exertions of benevolence, of compassion, of godlike mercy, had then been totally prevented! Who could then have said to the lover of men,

"Thy mind throughout my life be shown,
While list'ning to the wretch's cry,
The widow's or the orphan's groan,
On mercy's wings I swiftly fly,
The poor and needy to relieve;
Myself, my all for them to give?"

It is the just observation of a benevolent man,

"All worldly joys go less,
Than that one joy of doing kindnesses."

Surely, "in keeping" this commandment, if no other, there is a great reward. "As we have time, let us do good unto all men;" good of every kind, and in every degree. Accordingly, the more good we do, (other circumstances being equal,) the happier we shall be. The more we deal our bread to the hungry, and cover the naked with garments, the more we relieve the stranger, and visit them that are sick or in prison; the more kind offices we do to those

that groan under the various evils of human life: the more comfort we receive even in the present world; the greater the recompense we have in our own bosom.

10. To sum up what has been said under this head. As the more holy we are upon earth, the more happy we must be, (seeing there is an inseparable connexion between holiness and happiness;) as the more good we do to others, the more of present reward redounds into our own bosom: even as our sufferings for God lead us to *rejoice* in him, "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Therefore the fall of Adam, first by giving us an opportunity of being far more holy; secondly, by giving us the occasions of doing innumerable good works, which otherwise could not have been done; and thirdly, by putting it into our power to suffer for God, whereby "the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon us;" may be of such advantage to the children of men, even in the present life, as they will not thoroughly comprehend, till they attain life everlasting.

11. It is then we shall be enabled fully to comprehend, not only the advantages, which accrue at the present time to the sons of men, by the fall of their first parent, but the infinitely greater advantages which they may reap from it in eternity. In order to form some conception of this, we may remember the observation of the Apostle, "As one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." The most glorious stars will undoubtedly be those who are the most holy; who bear most of that image of God wherein they were created. The next in glory to these will be those who have been most abundant in good works: and next to them, those that have suffered most, according to the will of God. But what advantages in every one of

these respects, will the children of God receive in heaven, by God's permitting the introduction of pain upon earth, in consequence of sin? By occasion of this, they attained many holy tempers, which otherwise could have had no being: resignation to God, confidence in him in times of trouble and danger, patience, meekness, long-suffering, and the whole train of passive virtues. And on account of this superior holiness, they will then enjoy superior happiness. Again. Every one will then "receive his own reward, according to his own labour." Every individual will be "rewarded according to his work." But the fall gave rise to innumerable good works, which could otherwise never have existed, such as ministering to the necessities of saints, yea, relieving the distrest in every kind. And hereby innumerable stars will be added to their eternal crown. Yet again. There will be an abundant reward in heaven, for *suffering* as well as for doing the will of God: "these light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Therefore that event, which occasioned the entrance of suffering into the world, has thereby occasioned, to all the children of God, an increase of glory to all eternity. For although the sufferings themselves will be at an end; although

The pain of life shall then be o'er,
The anguish and distracting care;
The sighing grief shall weep no more;
And sin shall never enter there:

Yet the joys occasioned thereby shall never end, but flow at God's right-hand for evermore.

12. There is one advantage more that we reap

from Adam's fall, which is not unworthy our attention. Unless in Adam all had died, being in the loins of their first parent, every descendant of Adam, every child of man, must have personally answered for himself to God. It seems to be a necessary consequence of this, that if he had once fallen, once violated any command of God, there would have been no possibility of his rising again; there was no help, but he must have perished without remedy. For that covenant knew not to show mercy: the word was, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Now who would not rather be on the footing he is now? Under a covenant of mercy? Who would wish to hazard a whole eternity upon one stake? Is it not infinitely more desirable to be in a state wherein, though encompassed with infirmities, yet we do not run such a desperate risk, but if we fall we may rise again? Wherein we may say,

"My trespass is grown up to heaven!
But, far above the skies,
In Christ abundantly forgiven,
I see thy mercies rise!"

13. In Christ! Let me entreat every serious person, once more to fix his attention here. All that has been said, all that can be said on these subjects, centers in this point, The fall of Adam produced the death of Christ! Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: Yea,

Let earth and heaven agree,
Angels and men be join'd,
To celebrate with me
The Saviour of mankind;
T' adore the all-atoning Lamb,
And bless the sound of Jesu's name!

If God had prevented the fall of man, *The Word* had never been *made flesh:* nor had we ever "seen his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." Those mysteries never had been displayed, "which the very angels desire to look into." Methinks this consideration swallows up all the rest, and should never be out of our thoughts. Unless "by one man, judgment had come upon all men to condemnation," neither angels nor men could ever have known "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

14. See then, upon the whole, how little reason we have to repine at the fall of our first parent, since herefrom we may derive such unspeakable advantages, both in time and eternity. See how small pretence there is for questioning the mercy of God in permitting that event to take place! Since therein, mercy, by infinite degrees, rejoices over judgment! Where then is the man that presumes to blame God, for not preventing Adam's sin? Should we not rather bless him from the ground of the heart, for therein laying the grand scheme of man's redemption, and making way for that glorious manifestation of his wisdom, holiness, justice and mercy? If indeed God had decreed before the foundation of the world, that millions of men should dwell in everlasting burnings, because Adam sinned, hundreds or thousands of years before they had a being; I know not who could thank him for this, unless the devil and his angels: seeing, on this supposition, all those millions of unhappy spirits would be plunged into hell by Adam's sin, without any possible advantage from it. But, blessed be God, this is not the case. Such a decree never existed. On the contrary, every one born of a woman, may be an unspeakable gainer thereby: and none ever was or can be a loser, but by his own choice.

15. We see here a full answer to that plausible account "of the origin of evil," published to the world some years since, and supposed to be unanswerable: "that it necessarily resulted from the nature of matter, which God was not able to alter." It is very kind in this sweet-tongued orator to make an excuse for God! But there is really no occasion for it: God hath answered for himself. He made man in his own image, a spirit endued with understanding and liberty. Man abusing that liberty, produced evil; brought sin and pain into the world. This God permitted, in order to a fuller manifestation of his wisdom, justice and mercy, by bestowing on all who would receive it, an infinitely greater happiness, than they could possibly have attained, if Adam had not fallen.

16. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Although a thousand particulars of "his judgments, and of his ways, are unsearchable to us, and past our *finding out*," yet may we discern the general scheme, running through time into eternity. "According to the counsel of his own will," the plan he had laid before the foundation of the world, he created the parent of all mankind in his own image. And he permitted *all men* to be *made sinners*, *by the disobedience of* this *one* man, that *by the obedience of one*, all who receive *the free gift*, may be infinitely holier and happier to all eternity!

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

A

SERMON

ON JEREMIAH xxiii. 6.

JEREMIAH xxiii. 6.

This is his name, whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

1. HOW dreadful, and how innumerable are the contests, which have arisen about religion! And not only among the children of this world, among those who knew not what true religion was; but even among the children of God, those who had experienced "the kingdom of God within them," who had tasted of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." How many of these in all ages, instead of joining together against the common enemy, have turned their weapons against each other, and so not only wasted their precious time, but hurt one another's spirits, weakened each other's hands, and so hindered the great work of their common Master! How many of the weak have hereby been offended? How many of the "lame turned out of the way?" How many sinners confirmed in their disregard of all religion, and their contempt of those that profess it? And how many of "the excellent ones upon earth" have been constrained to "weep in secret places?"

2. What would not every lover of God, and his neighbour do, what would he not suffer to remedy this sore evil? To remove contention from the children of God? To restore or preserve peace among them? What but a good conscience would he think too dear to part with, in order to promote this valuable end? And suppose we cannot *make* these "wars to cease in all the world," suppose we cannot reconcile the children of God to each other, however let

each do what he can, let him contribute if it be but two mites towards it. Happy are they who are able in any degree to promote "peace and good will among men!" Especially among good men; among those that are all listed under the banner of *the Prince of Peace:* and are therefore peculiarly engaged, "as much as lies in them, to live peaceably with all men."

3. It would be a considerable step towards this glorious end, if we could bring good men to understand one another. Abundance of disputes arise purely from the want of this, from mere misapprehension. Frequently neither of the contending parties understands what his opponent means; whence it follows, that each violently attacks the other, while there is no real difference butween them. And yet it is not always an easy matter, to convince them of this. Particularly when their passions are moved: it is then attended with the utmost difficulty. However it is not impossible: especially when we attempt it, not trusting in ourselves, but having all our dependence upon him, with whom all things are possible. How soon is he able to disperse the cloud, to shine upon their hearts, and to enable them both to understand each other, and *the truth as it is in Jesus!*

4. One very considerable article of this truth is contained in the words above recited. This is his name whereby he shall be called, *The Lord our righteousness:* a truth this, which enters deep into the nature of Christianity, and in a manner supports the whole frame of it. Of this undoubtedly may be affirmed, what Luther affirms of a truth closely connected with it, it is *Articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae:* the christian church stands or falls with it. It is certainly the pillar and ground of faith.

of which alone cometh salvation : of that faith, which is found in all the children of God, and which "unless a man keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly."

5. Might not one therefore reasonably expect that however they differed in others, all those who name the name of Christ should agree in this point? But how far is this from being the case? There is scarce any wherein they are so little agreed : wherein those who all profess to follow Christ seem so widely and irreconcileably to differ. I say *seem;* because I am thoroughly convinced, that many of them only seem to differ. The disagreement is more in words than in sentiments; they are much nearer in judgment than in language. And a wide difference in language there certainly is, not only between Protestants and Papists, but between Protestant and Protestant; yea, even between those who all believe justification by faith; who agree, as well in this, as every other fundamental doctrine of the Gospel.

6. But if the difference be more in *opinion* than real *experience*, and more in *expression* than in *opinion*, how can it be, that even the children of God should so vehemently contend with each other on the point? Several reasons may be assigned for this : the chief is their not understanding one another; joined with too keen an attachment to their *opinions*, and particular modes of *expression*.

In order to remove this, at least in some measure, in order to our understanding one another on this head, I shall by the help of God endeavour to show,

I. What is the righteousness of Christ;

II. When, and in what sense, it is imputed to us :

166795

And conclude with a short and plain application.

And, I. What is the Righteousness of Christ? It is twofold, either his divine or his human righteousness.

1. His divine righteousness belongs to his divine nature, as he is ὁ ὤν, *He that existeth, over all,* God *blessed for ever:* the supreme, the eternal: "equal with the Father, as touching his godhead, though inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood." Now this is his eternal, essential, immutable holiness: his infinite mercy and truth: In all which "he and the Father are one."

But I do not apprehend that the divine righteousness of Christ is immediately concerned in the present question. I believe few, if any, do now contend for the *imputation of this* righteousness to us. Whoever believes the doctrine of imputation, understands it chiefly, if not solely, of his human righteousness.

2. The human righteousness of Christ belongs to him in his human nature; as he is "*the mediator between* God and man, the man Christ Jesus." This is either *internal* or *external.* His internal righteousness is the image of God, stamped on every power and faculty of his soul. It is a copy of his divine righteousness, so far as it can be imparted to an human spirit. It is a transcript of the divine purity, the divine justice, mercy and truth. It includes love, reverence, resignation to his Father; humility, meekness, gentleness; love to lost mankind, and every other holy and heavenly temper: And all these in the highest degree, without any defect, or mixture of unholiness.

3. It was the least part of his *external righteousness* that he did nothing amiss: that he knew no

outward sin of any kind, neither was *guile found in his mouth:* that never spoke one improper word, nor did one improper action. Thus far it is only a *negative* righteousness, though such an one as never did, nor ever can belong to any one that is born of a woman, save himself alone. But even his outward righteousness was *positive too. He did all things well.* In every word of his tongue, in every work of his hands, he did precisely the will of him that sent him. In the whole course of his life, he did the will of God on earth as the angels do it in heaven. All he acted and spoke was exactly right in every circumstance. The whole and every part of his obedience was complete. *He fulfilled all righteousness.*

4. But his obedience implied more than all this: it implied not only doing, but suffering: suffering the whole will of God, from the time he came into the world, till "he bore our sins in his own body upon the tree:" yea, till having made a full atonement for them, He bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. This is usually termed the *passive* righteousness of Christ, the former, his *active* righteousness. But as the active and passive righteousness of Christ were never in fact separated from each other, so we never need separate them at all either in speaking or even in thinking. And it is with regard to both these conjointly, that Jesus is called, *The Lord our righteousness.*

II. But when is it, that any of us may truly say, "The Lord our righteousness?" In other words, when is it that the righteousness of Christ is *imputed* to us, and in what sense is it imputed?

1. Look through all the world, and all the men

therein are either believers or unbelievers. The first thing then which admits of no dispute among reasonable men is this. To all believers the righteousness of Christ is imputed; to unbelievers it is not.

But when is it imputed? When they believe. In that very hour the righteousness of Christ is theirs. It is imputed to every one that believes, as soon as he believes: faith and the righteousness of Christ are inseparable. For if he believes according to scripture, he believes in the righteousness of Christ. There is no true faith, that is, justifying faith, which hath not the righteousness of Christ for its object.

2. It is true, believers may not all speak alike; they may not all use the same language. It is not to be expected that they should: we cannot reasonably require it of them. A thousand circumstances may cause them to vary from each other in the manner of expressing themselves. But a difference of expression does not necessarily imply a difference of sentiment. Different persons may use different expressions, and yet mean the same thing. Nothing is more common than this, although we seldom make sufficient allowance for it. Nay, it is not easy for the same persons, when they speak of the same thing at a considerable distance of time, to use exactly the same expressions, even though they retain the same sentiments. How then can we be rigorous, in requiring others to use just the same expressions with us?

3. We may go a step farther yet. Men may differ from us in their opinions as well as their expressions, and nevertheless be partakers with us of the same precious faith. It is possible they may not have a *distinct apprehension* of the very blessing which they enjoy. Their *ideas* may not be so *clear*, and yet their experience may be as sound as ours.

There is a wide difference between the natural faculties of men, their understandings in particular. And that difference is exceedingly increased by the manner of their education. Indeed this alone may occasion an inconceivable difference in their opinions of various kinds. And why not upon this head, as well as on any other? But still, though their opinions as well as expressions may be confused and inaccurate, their hearts may cleave to God through the Son of his love, and be truly interested in his righteousness.

4. Let us then make all that allowance to others, which were we in their place, we would desire for ourselves. Who is ignorant (to touch again on that circumstance only) of the amazing power of education? And who that knows it, can expect, suppose, a member of the church of Rome, either to think or speak clearly on this subject? And yet if we had heard even dying Bellarmine cry out, when he was asked "*Unto which of the saints wilt thou turn?*" "*Fidere meritis Christi tutissimum;* it is safest to trust in the merits of Christ:" would we have affirmed that notwithstanding his wrong opinions, he had no share in his righteousness?

5. "But in what sense is this righteousness imputed to believers?" In this: all believers are forgiven and accepted, not for the sake of any thing in them, or of any thing that ever was, that is, or ever can be done by them, but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for them. I say again, not for the sake of any thing in them or done by them, of their own righteousness or works. "Not for works of righteousness which we have done, but of his own mercy he saved us. By grace ye are saved through faith.—Not of works, lest any man should boast:" but wholly and solely for the

sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for us. We are "justified freely, by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." And this is not only the means of our *obtaining* the favour of God, but of our continuing therein. It is thus we come to God at first: it is by the same we come unto him ever after. We walk in one and the same *new* and *living* way, till our spirit returns to God.

6. And this is the doctrines, which I have constantly believed and taught, for near eight-and-twenty years.* This I published to all the world in the year 1738, and ten or twelve times since, in those words, and many others to the same effect, extracted from the homilies of our church.

"These things must necessarily go together in our justification, upon God's part his great mercy and grace, upon Christ's part, the satisfaction of God's justice, and on our part, faith in the merits of Christ. So that the grace of God doth not shut out the righteousness of God in our justification, but only shutteth out the righteousness of man, as to *deserving* our justification."

"That we are justified by faith alone, is spoken to take away clearly all merit of our works, and wholly to ascribe the *merit* and *deserving* of our justification to Christ only. Our justification comes freely of the mere mercy of God. For whereas all the world was not able to pay any part towards our ransom, it pleased him, without any of our deserving, to prepare for us Christ's body and blood, whereby our ransom might be paid, and his justice satisfied. Christ therefore is now the righteousness of all them that truly believe in him."

7. The hymns published a year or two after this,

* This sermon was first published about five-and-twenty years ago.

and since republished several times, (a clear testimony that my judgment was still the same) speak full to the same purpose. To cite all the passages to this effect, would be to transcribe a great part of the volumes. Take one for all, which was reprinted seven years ago, five years ago, two years ago, and some months since.

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
"My beauty are, my glorious dress:
"Midst flaming worlds in these array'd
"With joy shall I lift up my head."

The whole hymn expresses the same sentiment from the beginning to the end.

8. In the sermon on justification, published nineteen, and again seven or eight years ago, I express the same thing in these words, p. 87. "In considering of this, that the Son of God hath tasted death for every man, God hath now 'reconciled the world unto himself, not imputing to them their former trespasses.' So that for the sake of his well-beloved Son, of what he hath done and suffered for us, God now vouchsafes on one only condition (which himself also enables us to perform) both to remit the punishment due to our sins, to reinstate us in his favour, and to restore our dead souls to spiritual life, as the earnest of life eternal."

9. This is more largely and particularly expressed, in the treatise on justification, which I published last year. "If we take the phrase of 'imputing Christ's righteousness,' for the bestowing (as it were) the righteousness of Christ, including his obedience, as well passive as active in the return of it; that is, in the privileges, blessings and benefits purchased by it: so a believer may be said to be justified, by 'the

righteousness of Christ imputed.' The meaning is, God justifies the believer for the sake of Christ's righteousness, and not for any righteousness of his own. So Calvin, (*Institut.* l. 2. c. 17.) 'Christ by his obedience procured and merited for us grace or favour with God the Father. Again, Christ by his obedience procured or purchased righteousness for us. And yet again: all such expressions as these, that we are justified by the grace of God, that Christ is our righteousness, that righteousness was procured for us by the death and resurrection of Christ, import the same thing:' namely, that the righteousness of Christ, both his active and passive righteousness, is the meritorious cause of our justification, and has procured for us at God's hand, that upon our believing, we should be accounted righteous by him." p. 5.

10. But perhaps some will object, "Nay, but you affirm, that 'faith is imputed to us for righteousness." St. Paul affirms this over and over; therefore I affirm it too. Faith is imputed for righteousness to every believer; namely, faith in the righteousness of Christ, but this is exactly the same thing which has been said before. For by that expression I mean neither more nor less, than that we are justified by faith, not by works: or that every believer is forgiven and accepted, merely for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered.

11. But "is not a believer invested or clothed with the righteousness of Christ?" Undoubtedly he is. And accordingly the words above recited, are the language of every believing heart:

"Jesus thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress."

That is, for the sake of thy active and passive righteousness, I am forgiven and accepted of God.

"But must not we put off the filthy rags of our own righteousness, before we can put on the spotless righteousness of Christ?" Certainly we must; that is, in plain terms, we must *repent*, before we can *believe the Gospel.* We must be cut off from dependence upon ourselves, before we can depend upon Christ. We must cast away all confidence in our own righteousness, or we cannot have a true confidence in his. Till we are delivered from trusting in any thing that we do, we cannot thoroughly trust in what he has done and suffered. First "we receive the sentence of death in ourselves; then we trust in him that lived and died for us."

12. "But do not you believe *inherent* righteousness?" Yes, in its proper place: not as the ground of our acceptance with God, but as the *fruit* of it: not in the place of imputed righteousness, but as consequent upon it. That is, I believe God *implants* righteousness in every one to whom he has *imputed* it. I believe "Jesus Christ is made of God unto us sanctification," as well as righteousness: or, that God sanctifies, as well as justifies, all them that believe in him. They to whom the righteousness of Christ is imputed, are made righteous by the Spirit of Christ, are renewed in the image of God, "after the likeness wherein they were created, in righteousness and true holiness."

13. "But do not you put faith in the room of Christ, or of his righteousness?" By no means. I take particular care to put each of these in its proper place. The righteousness of Christ is the whole and sole *foundation* of all our hope. It is by faith that the Holy Ghost enables us to build upon this foundation. God gives this faith. In that moment we

are accepted of God: and yet, not for the sake of that faith, but of what Christ has done and suffered for us. You see, each of these has its proper place, and neither clashes with the other: we believe, we love; we endeavour to walk in all the commandments of the Lord blameless. Yet,

While thus we bestow
Our moments below,
Ourselves we forsake,
And refuge in Jesus's righteousness take;
His passion alone,
The foundation we own:
And pardon we claim,
And eternal redemption in Jesus's name.

14. I therefore no more deny the righteousness of Christ, than I do the Godhead of Christ. And a man may full as justly charge me with denying the one as the other. Neither do I deny *imputed righteousness:* this is another unkind and unjust accusation. I always did, and do still continually affirm, that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to every believer. But who deny it? Why, all *infidels*, whether baptized and unbaptized: all who affirm the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to be a *cunningly* devised fable. All Socinians and Arians: all who deny the supreme Godhead of the Lord that bought them. They of consequence deny his divine righteousness, as they suppose him to be a mere creature. And they deny his human righteousness, as imputed to any man, seeing they believe every one is accepted *for his own righteousness.*

15. The human righteousness of Christ, at least the imputation of it, as the whole and sole meritorious cause of the justification of a sinner before God,

is likewise denied by the members of the church of Rome: by all of them who are true to the principles of their own church. But undoubtedly there are many among them whose experience goes beyond their principles. Who, though they are far from expressing themselves justly, yet feel what they know not how to express. Yea, although their conceptions of this great truth be as crude as their expressions, yet *with their heart they believe;* they rest on Christ alone both unto present and eternal salvation.

16. With these we may rank those even in the reformed churches, who are usually termed Mystics. One of the chief of these in the present century (at least in England) was Mr. Law. It is well known that he absolutely and zealously denied the imputation of the righteousness of Christ: as zealously as Robert Barclay, who scruples not to say, "Imputed righteousness, imputed nonsense!" The body of the people known by the name of Quakers, espouse the same sentiment. Nay, the generality of those who profess themselves members of the Church of England, are either totally ignorant of the matter, and know nothing about *imputed righteousness*, or deny this and justification by faith together, as destructive of good works. To these we may add thousands of those lately enlightened by the writings of Dr. Taylor. On the last I am not called to pass any sentence: I leave them to him that made them. But will any one dare to affirm, that all Mystics, (such as Mr. Law in particular) all Quakers, all Presbyterians or Independents, and all members of the Church of England, who are not clear in their opinions or expressions, are void of all Christian experience? That consequently they are all in a state of damnation, "without hope, without God in the world?" However confused their ideas may be,

however improper their language, may there not be many of them whose heart is right towards God, and who effectually know "the Lord our righteousness?"

17. But blessed be God, we are not among those who are so dark in their conceptions and expressions. We no more deny the *phrase* than the *thing:* but we are unwilling to obtrude it on other men. Let them use either this or such other expressions as they judge to be more exactly scriptural, provided their heart rests only on what Christ has done and suffered, for pardon, grace, and glory. I cannot express this better than in Mr. Hervey's words, worthy to be wrote in letters of gold. "We are not solicitous as to any *particular set of phrases.* Only let men be humbled as repenting criminals at Christ's feet, let them rely as devoted pensioners on his merits, and they are undoubtedly in the way to a blessed immortality."

18. Is there any need, is there any possibility of saying more? Let us only abide by this declaration, and all the contention about this or that *particular phrase* is torn up by the roots. Keep to this: "All who are humbled as repenting criminals at Christ's feet, and rely as devoted pensioners on his merits, are in the way to a blessed immortality:" and what room for dispute? Who denies this? Do we not all meet on this ground? What then shall we wrangle about? A man of peace here proposes terms of accommodation to all the contending parties. We desire no better. We accept of the terms. We subscribe to them with heart and hand. Whoever refuses so to do, set a mark upon that man! He is an enemy of peace, a troubler of Israel, a disturber of the church of God.

19. In the mean time, what we are afraid of is this; lest any should use the phrase, "The righ-

teousness of Christ," or, The righteousness of Christ is "*imputed to me*," as a cover for his unrighteousness. We have known this done a thousand times. A man has been reproved, suppose, for drunkenness. "O," said he, "I pretend to no righteousness of *my own:* Christ is *my righteousness*." Another has been told, that "the extortioner, the unjust, shall not inherit the kingdom of God." He replies with all assurance, "I am unjust in myself, but I have a spotless righteousness in Christ." And thus though a man be as far from the practice as from the tempers of a Christian, though he neither has the mind which was in Christ, nor in any respect walks as he walked, yet he has armour of proof against all conviction, in what he calls the *righteousness of Christ.*

20. It is the seeing so many deplorable instances of this kind, which makes us sparing in the use of these expressions. And I cannot but call upon all of you, who use them frequently, and beseech you in the name of God our Saviour, whose you are, and whom you serve, earnestly to guard all that hear you against this accursed abuse of them. O warn them (it may be they will hear your voice) against "continuing in sin that grace may abound!" Warn them against making *Christ the minister of sin!* Against making void that solemn decree of God, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," by a vain imagination of being *holy in Christ.* O warn them, that if they remain unrighteous, the righteousness of Christ will profit them nothing! Cry aloud, (Is there not a cause?) that for this very end the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, that "the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us," and that we may "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

It remains only, to make a short and plain appli-

cation. And, first, I would address myself to you, who violently oppose these expressions, and are ready to condemn all that use them as Antinomians. But is not this bending the bow too much the other way? Why should you quarrel with *them* for using the phrases they like, any more than they with *you*, for taking the same liberty? Or if they do quarrel with you upon that account, do not imitate the bigotry which you blame. At least allow *them* the liberty which they ought to allow *you*. And why should you be angry at an *expression*? "O, it has been abused." And what expression has not? However the abuse may be removed, and at the same time the use remain. Above all, be sure to retain the important sense which is couched under that expression. All the blessings I enjoy, all I hope for in time and in eternity, are given wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered for me.

I would, secondly, add a few words to you who are fond of these expressions. And permit me to ask, Do not I allow enough? What can any reasonable man desire more? I allow the whole *sense* which you contend for: that we have every blessing *through the righteousness of God our Saviour*. I allow *you* to use whatever expressions you choose, and that a thousand times over: only guarding them against that dreadful abuse, which you are as deeply concerned to prevent as I am. I myself frequently use the expression in question, *imputed righteousness*: and often put this and the like expressions into the mouth of a whole congregation. But allow me liberty of conscience herein: allow me the right of private judgment. Allow me to use it just as often as I judge it preferable to any other expression. And be not angry with me if I cannot judge it proper to use any one expression every two minutes. *You*

may if you please: but do not condemn me because I do not. Do not for this represent me as a Papist, or "an enemy to the righteousness of Christ." Bear with *me*, as I do with *you:* else how shall we fulfil the law of Christ? Do not make tragical outcries, as though I was "subverting the very foundations of Christianity." Whoever does this, does me much wrong: the Lord lay it not to his charge! I lay, and have done for many years, the very same foundation with you. And indeed, "other foundadation can no man lay, than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ." I build inward and outward holiness thereon, as you do, even by faith. Do not therefore suffer any distate, or unkindness, no, not any shyness or coldness in your heart. If there were a *difference of opinion*, where is our religion, if we cannot *think and let think?* What hinders, but you may forgive *me*, as easily as I forgive *you?* How much more, when there is only a *difference of expression?* Nay, hardly so much as that. All the dispute being only whether a particular mode of expression shall be used *more or less frequently?* Surely we must earnestly desire to contend with one another, before we can make this a bone of contention! O let us not any more, for such very trifles as these, give our common enemies room to blaspheme! Rather let us at length cut off occasion from them that seek occasion! Let us at length (O why was it not done before?) join hearts and hands in the service of our great Master. As we have "one Lord, one faith, one hope of our calling;" let us all strengthen each other's hands in God, and with one heart and one mouth declare to all mankind, "the Lord our righteousness."

THE GENERAL DELIVERANCE.

A

SERMON

ON ROM. viii. 19, 20, 21, 22.

The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.

Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

For we know, that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now.

1. NOTHING is more sure, than that as "the Lord is loving to every man, so his mercy is over all his works;" all that have sense, all that are capable of pleasure or pain, of happiness or misery. In consequence of this, "he openeth his hand and filleth all things living with plenteousness; he prepareth food for cattle, as well as herbs for the children of men." He provideth for the fowls of the air, "feeding the young ravens when they cry unto him. He sendeth the springs into the rivers, that run among the hills," to give drink to every beast of the field, and that even "the wild asses (may) quench their thirst:" And suitable to this, he directs us to be tender of even meaner creatures, to show mercy to these also. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," (a custom which is observed in the Eastern countries, even to this day.) And this is by no means contradicted by St. Paul's question, "Doth God take care for oxen?" Without doubt, he does. We cannot deny it without flatly contradicting his word. The plain meaning of the

Apostle is, Is this all that is implied in the text? Hath it not a farther meaning? Does it not teach us, We are to feed the bodies of those, whom we desire to feed our souls? Mean time it is certain, God giveth grass for the cattle, (as well as) herbs for the use of men."

2. But how are the Scriptures reconcileable to the present state of things? How are they consistent with what we daily see round about us, in every part of the creation? If the Creator and Father of every living thing, is rich in mercy towards all; if he does not overlook or despise any of the works of his own hands: if he wills even the meanest of them to be happy, according to their degree: how comes it to pass, that such a complication of evils oppresses, yea, overwhelms them? How is it, that misery of all kinds overspreads the face of the earth? This is a question which has puzzled the wisest philosophers in all ages. And it cannot be answered without having recourse to the oracles of God. But take these for our guide, we may inquire,

I. What was the original state of the brute creation?

II. In what state is it at present? And

III. In what state will it be, at the manifestation of the children of God?

I. 1. We may inquire, in the first place, What was the original state of the brute creation? And may not we learn this, even from the place which was assigned them, namely, the garden of God? All the beasts of the field, and all the fowls of the air, were with Adam in Paradise. And there is no

question, but their state was suited to their place: it was paradisiacal, perfectly happy. Undoubtedly it bore a near resemblance to the state of man himself. By taking therefore a short view of the one, we may conceive the other. Now "man was made in the image of God." But *God is a Spirit.* So therefore was man. Only that spirit being designed to dwell on earth, was lodged in an earthly tabernacle. As such, he had an innate principle of *self-motion.* And so, it seems, has every spirit in the universe; this being the proper distinguishing difference between spirit and matter, which is totally, essentially passive and inactive, as appears from a thousand experiments. He was, after the likeness of his Creator, endued with *understanding*, a capacity of apprehending whatever objects were brought before it, and of judging concerning them. He was endued with a *will*, exerting itself in various affections and passions; and lastly, with *liberty*, or freedom of choice, without which all the rest would have been in vain, and he would have been no more capable of serving his Creator, than a piece of earth or marble. He would have been as incapable of vice or virtue, as any part of the inanimate creation. In these, in the power of self-motion, understanding, will, and liberty, the natural image of God consisted.

2. How far his power of self-motion then extended, it is impossible for us to determine. It is probable, that he had a far higher degree, both of swiftness and strength, than any of his posterity ever had, and much more any of the lower creatures. It is certain he had such strength of understanding as no man ever since had. His understanding was perfect in its kind: capable of apprehending all things clearly, and judging concerning them according to truth, without any mixture of error. His will had no

wrong bias of any sort, but all his passions and affections were regular, being steadily and uniformly guided by the dictates of his unerring understanding; embracing nothing but good, and every good in proportion to its degree of intrinsic goodness. His liberty likewise was wholly guided by his understanding: he chose or refused, according to its direction. Above all, (which was his highest excellence, far more valuable than all the rest put together) he was a creature capable of knowing, loving, and obeying his Creator. And in fact, he did know God, did unfeignedly love, and uniformly obey him. This was the supreme perfection of man, (as it is of all intelligent beings,) the continually seeing, and loving, and obeying the Father of the spirits of all flesh. From this right state, and right use of all his faculties, his happiness naturally flowed. In this the essence of his happiness consisted; but it was increased by all the things that were round about him. He saw with unspeakable pleasure, the order, the beauty, the harmony of all the creatures; of all animated, all inanimate nature; the serenity of the skies, the sun walking in brightness, the sweetly variegated clothing of the earth: the trees, the fruits, the flowers;

"And liquid lapse of murmuring streams."

Nor was this pleasure interrupted by evil of any kind. It had no alloy of sorrow or pain, whether of body or mind. For while he was innocent he was impassive, incapable of suffering. Nothing could stain his purity of joy. And to crown all, he was immortal.

3. To this creature, endued with all these excellent faculties, thus qualified for his high charge, God said, "Have thou dominion over the fish of the sea,

and over the fowls of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth," Gen. i. 28. And so the Psalmist, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field: and the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas!" Psal. viii. ver. 6. &c. So that man was God's vicegerent upon earth, the prince and governor of this lower world; and all the blessings of God flowed through him to the inferior creatures. Man was the channel of conveyance between his Creator and the whole brute creation.

4. But what blessings were those that were then conveyed through man, to the lower creatures? What was the original state of the brute creatures, when they were first created? This deserves a more attentive consideration than has been usually given it. It is certain these, as well as man, had an innate principle of *self-motion:* and that at least in as high a degree as they enjoy it at this day. Again. They were endued with a degree of *understanding*, not less than that they are possessed of now. They had also a *will*, including various passions, which likewise they still enjoy. And they had *liberty*, a power of choice, a degree of which is still found in every living creature. Nor can we doubt, but their understanding too was in the beginning perfect in its kind. Their passions and affections were regular, and their choice always guided by their understanding.

5. What then is the barrier between men and brutes? The line which they cannot pass? It was not reason. Set aside that ambiguous term: exchange it for the plain word, understanding: and who can deny that brutes have this? We may as well deny that they have sight or hearing. But it is this: man

is capable of God: the inferior creatures are not.—We have no ground to believe, that they are in any degree capable of knowing, loving, or obeying God. This is the specific difference between man and brute: the great gulf which they cannot pass over. And as a loving obedience to God was the perfection of men, so a loving obedience to man was the perfection of brutes. And as long as they continued in this, they were happy after their kind: happy in the right state and the right use of their respective faculties. Yea, and so long they had some shadowy resemblance of even *moral goodness*. For they had gratitude to man for benefits received, and a reverence for him. They had likewise a kind of benevolence to each other, unmixed with any contrary temper. How *beautiful* many of them were, we may conjecture from that which still remains; and that, not only in the noblest creatures, but in those of the lowest order. And they were all surrounded not only with plenteous food, but with every thing that could give them pleasure; pleasure unmixed with pain; for pain was not yet: it had not entered into paradise. And they too were immortal. For *God made not death: neither hath he pleasure in the death of any living*.

6. How true then is that word, "God saw every thing that he had made: and behold it was very good." But how far is this from being the present case? In what a condition is the whole lower world? To say nothing of inanimate nature, wherein all the elements seem to be out of course, and by turns to fight against man. Since man rebelled against his Maker: in what a state is all animated nature? Well might the Apostle say of this, "The whole creation groaneth together, and travaileth together in pain until now." This directly refers to the brute crea-

tion. In what state this is at present we are now to consider.

II. 1. As all the blessings of God in Paradise flowed through man to the inferior creatures; as man was the great channel of communication, between the Creator and the whole brute creation: so when man made himself incapable of transmitting those blessings, that communication was necessarily cut off. The intercourse between God and the inferior creatures being stopped, those blessings could no longer flow in upon them. And then it was that *the creature*, every creature *subjected to vanity:* to sorrow, to pain of every kind, to all manner of evils.—*Not* indeed *willingly:* not by its own choice; not by any act or deed of its own; *but by reason of him that subjected it;* by the wise permission of God, determining to draw eternal good out of this temporary evil.

2. But in what respects was *the creature*, every creature, then *made subject to vanity?* What did the meaner creatures suffer, when man rebelled against God? It is probable, they sustained much loss, even in the lower faculties, their vigour, strength and swiftness. But undoubtedly they suffered far more in their understanding, more than we can easily conceive. Perhaps insects and worms had then as much understanding as the most intelligent brutes have now, whereas millions of creatures have at present little more understanding than the earth on which they crawl, or the rock to which they adhere. They suffered still more in their will, in their passions, which were then variously distorted, and frequently set in flat opposition to the little understanding that was left them. Their liberty likewise was greatly impaired, yea, in many cases totally destroyed.—They are still utterly enslaved to irrational appetites,

which have the full dominion over them. The very foundations of their nature are out of course, are turned upside down. As man is deprived of *his* perfection, his loving obedience to God, so brutes are deprived of *their* perfection, their loving obedience to man. The far greater part of them flee from him, studiously avoid his hated presence. The most of the rest set him at open defiance, yea, destroy him, if it be in their power. A few only, those we commonly term domestic animals, retain more or less of their original disposition, (through the mercy of God) love him still and pay obedience to him.

3. Setting these few aside, how little shadow of good, of gratitude, of benevolence, of any right temper is now to be found in any part of the brute creation? On the contrary, what savage fierceness, what unrelenting cruelty, are invariably observed in thousands of creatures, yea, are inseparable from their natures? Is it only the lion, the tiger, the wolf, among the inhabitants of the forests and plains; the shark and a few more voracious monsters among the inhabitants of the waters; or the eagle among birds, that tears the flesh, sucks the blood, and crushes the bones of their helpless fellow creatures? Nay, the harmless fly, the laborious ant, the painted butterfly, are treated in the same merciless manner, even by the innocent songsters of the grove! The innumerable tribes of poor insects are continually devoured by them. And whereas there is but a small number, comparatively, of beasts of prey on the earth, it is quite otherwise in the liquid element: there are but few inhabitants of the waters, whether of the sea, or of the rivers, which do not devour whatsoever they can master. Yea, many species of them exceed herein all the beasts of the forest, and all the birds of prey. For none of

these have been ever observed to prey upon their own species,

Saevis inter se convenit ursis.

Even savage bears will not each other tear.

But many of the water savages swallow up all, even of their own kind, that are smaller and weaker than themselves: yea, such at present is the miserable constitution of the world, to such *vanity* is it now *subjected*, that an immense majority of creatures, perhaps a million to one, can no otherwise preserve their own lives than by destroying their fellow-creatures.

4. And is not the very form, the outward appearance of many of the creatures, as horrid as their dispositions? Where is the beauty which was stamped upon them, when they came first out of the hands of their Creator? There is not the least trace of it left: so far from it, that they are shocking to behold! Nay, they are not only terrible and grisly to look upon, but deformed, and that to a high degree. Yet their features, ugly as they are at best, are frequently made more deformed than usual, when they are distorted by pain, which they cannot avoid, any more than the wretched sons of men. Pain of various kinds, weakness, sickness, diseases innumerable, come upon them, perhaps from within, perhaps from one another, perhaps from the inclemency of seasons, from fire, hail, snow or storm, or from a thousands causes which they cannot foresee, or prevent.

5. Thus, "as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; even so death passed upon all men:" And not on man only, but on those creatures also,

that "did not sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression." And not death alone came upon them, but all its train of preparatory evils: pain, and ten thousand sufferings. Nor these only, but likewise all those irregular passions, all those unlovely tempers, (which in men are sins, and even in brutes, are sources of misery,) *passed upon all* the inhabitants of the earth, and remain in all, except the children of God.

6. During this season of *vanity*, not only the feebler creatures are continually destroyed by the stronger; not only the strong are frequently destroyed by those that are of equal strength: but both the one and the other are exposed to the violence and cruelty of him that is now their common enemy, man. And if his swiftness or strength is not equal to theirs, yet his art more than supplies that defect. By this he eludes all their force, how great soever it be: by this he defeats all their swiftness, and notwithstanding their various shifts and contrivances, discovers all their retreats. He pursues them over the widest plains, and through the thickest forests. He overtakes them in the fields of air, he finds them out in the depths of the sea. Nor are the mild and friendly creatures, who still own his sway, and are duteous to his commands, secured thereby from more than brutal violence, from outrage and abuse of various kinds. Is the generous horse, that serves his master's necessity or pleasure, with unwearied diligence; is the faithful dog that waits the motion of his hand, or his eye, exempt from this? What returns for their long and faithful service do many of these poor creatures find? And what a dreadful difference is there between what they suffer from their fellow-brutes, and what they suffer from the tyrant, man! The Lion, the Tiger, and the Shark, give

them pains from mere necessity, in order to prolong their own life; and put them out of their pain at once. But the human shark, without any such necessity, torments them of his free choice; and perhaps continues their lingering pain, till after months or years, death signs their release.

III. 1. But will the *creature*, will even the brute creation always remain in this deplorable condition? God forbid that we should affirm this, yea, or even entertain such a thought! "While the whole creation groaneth together," (whether men attend or not,) their groans are not dispersed in idle air, but enter into the ears of him that made them. While his creatures *travail together in pain*, he knoweth all their pain, and is bringing them nearer and nearer to the birth, which shall be accomplished in its season. He seeth *the earnest expectation* wherewith the whole animated creation *waiteth for* that final *manifestation of the sons of God:* in which *they themselves also shall be delivered*, (not by annihilation: annihilation is not deliverance,) *from the* present "bondage of corruption into (a measure of) the glorious liberty of the children of God."

2. Nothing can be more express. Away with vulgar prejudices, and let the plain word of God take place. They "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into glorious liberty:" even a measure, according as they are capable, of the liberty of the children of God."

A general view of this is given us in the twenty-first chapter of the Revelation, "When he that sitteth on the great white throne" hath pronounced, "Behold I make all things new:" when the word is fulfilled, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be

with them and be their God:" then the following blessing shall take place, (not only on the children of men; there is no such restriction in the text; but, on every creature according to its capacity.) "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And here shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

3. To descend to a few particulars. The whole brute creation will then undoubtedly be restored, not only to the vigour, strength, and swiftness, which they had at their creation, but to a far higher degree of each than they ever enjoyed. They will be restored, not only to that measure of understanding which they had in Paradise, but to a degree of it, as much higher than that, as the understanding of an elephant is beyond that of a worm. And whatever affections they had in the garden of God, will be restored with vast increase, being exalted and refined in a manner, which we ourselves are not now able to comprehend. The liberty they then had will be completely restored, and they will be free in all their motions. They will be delivered from all irregular appetites, from all unruly passions, from every disposition that is either evil in itself, or has any tendency to evil. No rage will be found in any creature, no fierceness, no cruelty, or thirst for blood. So far from it, that "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain." Isaiah xi. 6, &c.

4. Thus in that day all the vanity to which they are now helplessly subject, will be abolished: they

will suffer no more, either from within or without: the days of their groaning are ended. At the same time there can be no reasonable doubt, but all the horridness of their appearance, and all the deformity of their aspect will vanish away, and be exchanged for their primeval beauty. And with their beauty, their happiness will return, to which there can then be no obstruction. As there will be nothing within, so there will be nothing without, to give them any uneasiness: no heat or cold, no storm or tempest, but one perennial spring. In the new earth, as well as in the new heavens, there will be nothing to give pain, but every thing that the wisdom and goodness of God can create to give happiness. As a recompense for what they once suffered, while under the *bondage of corruption*, when God has *renewed the face of the earth*, and their corruptible body has put on incorruption, they shall enjoy happiness, suited to their state, without alloy, without interruption, and without end.

5. But though I doubt not, that the Father of all has a tender regard for even his lowest creatures, and that in consequence of this, he will make them large amends for all they suffer while under their present bondage, yet I dare not affirm, that he has an *equal regard* for them as for the children of men. I do not believe, that

> "He sees *with equal eyes*, as Lord of all
> A hero perish, or a sparrow fall!"

By no means. This is exceeding pretty; but it is absolutely false. For though

> "Mercy, with truth and endless grace,
> O'er all his works doth reign,

Yet chiefly he delights to bless
His favourite creature, Man."

God regards his meanest creatures much; but he regards man much more. He does not *equally regard* a hero and a sparrow, the best of men and the lowest of brutes. "How *much more* does your heavenly Father care for you?" says he who is *in the bosom of the Father*. Those who thus strain the point are clearly confuted by his question, "Are not ye *much better* than they?" Let it suffice, that God regards every thing that he hath made in its own order, and in proportion to that measure of his own image, which he has stamped upon it.

6. If it be objected to all this, (as very probably it will,) "But of what use will those creatures be in that future state?" I answer this by another question, Of what use are they now? If there be, (as has commonly been supposed,) eight thousand species of insects, who is able to inform us of what use seven thousand of them are? If there are four thousand species of fishes, who can tell us of what use are more than three thousand of them? If there are six hundred sorts of birds, who can tell of what use five hundred of those species are? If there be four hundred sorts of beasts, to what use do three hundred of them serve? Consider this; consider how little we know of even the present designs of God; and then you will not wonder, that we know still less of what he designs to do in the new heavens and the new earth.

7. "But what end does it answer, to dwell upon this subject which we so imperfectly understand?" To consider so much as we do understand, so much as God has been pleased to reveal to us, may answer that excellent end, to illustrate that mercy of God,

which *is over all his works*. And it may exceedingly confirm our belief, that much more he is *loving to every man*. For how well may we urge our Lord's word, *Are not ye much better than they?* If then the Lord takes such care of the fowls of the air, and of the beasts of the field, shall he not much more take care of *you*, creatures of a nobler order? If *the Lord will save* (as the inspired writer affirms) *both man and beast*, in their several degrees, surely *the children of men* may *put their trust under the shadow of his wings!*

8. May it not answer another end, namely, furnish us with a full answer to a plausible objection against the justice of God, in suffering numberless creatures, that never had sinned, to be so severely punished? They could not sin, for they were not moral agents. Yet how severely do they suffer? Yea, many of them, beasts of burden in particular, almost the whole time of their abode on earth. So that they can have no retribution here below. But the objection vanishes away, if we consider that something better remains after death, for these poor creatures also: that these likewise shall one day be delivered from this bondage of corruption, and shall then receive ample amends for all their present sufferings.

9. One more excellent end may undoubtedly be answered by the preceding considerations. They may encourage us to imitate him, whose mercy is over all his works. They may soften our hearts towards the meaner creatures, knowing that the Lord careth for them. It may enlarge our hearts towards those poor creatures, to reflect that as vile as they appear in our eyes, not one of them is forgotten in the sight of our Father who is in heaven. Through all the vanity to which they are now subjected, let

us look to what God hath prepared for them. Yea, let us habituate ourselves to look forward, beyond this present scene of bondage, to the happy time when they will be delivered therefrom, into the liberty of the children of God.

10. From what has been said I cannot but draw one inference, which no man of reason can deny.—If it is this which distinguishes men from beasts, That they are creatures capable of God; capable of knowing, and loving, and enjoying him: then whoever is *without God in the world;* whoever does not know, or love, or enjoy God, and is not careful about the matter, does in effect disclaim the nature of man, and degrade himself into a beast. Let such vouchsafe a little attention to those remarkable words of Solomon; "I said in my heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, they might see, that they themselves are beasts."* *These* sons of men are undoubtedly beasts; and that by their own act and deed. For they deliberately and wilfully disclaim the grand characteristic of Human Nature. It is true they may have a share of reason: they have speech, and they walk erect. But they have not the mark, the only mark, which totally separates man from the brute creation. "That which befalleth beasts, the same thing befalleth them." They are equally without God in the world; "so that a man (of this kind) hath no pre-eminence above a beast."

11. So much more, let all those who are of a nobler turn of mind, assert the distinguishing dignity of their nature! Let all who are of a more generous spirit, know and maintain their rank in the scale of beings. Rest not, till you enjoy the privilege of humanity, the knowledge and love of God. Lift up

* Eccles. iii. 18.

your heads, ye creatures capable of God. Lift up your hearts to the source of your being!

"Know God, and teach your souls to know
The joys that from religion flow."

Give your hearts to him, who, together with ten thousand blessings, has *given* you *his Son*, *his only Son!* Let your continual *fellowship* be *with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ!* Let God be in all your thoughts, and ye will be men indeed: let him be your God and your all! The desire of your eyes, the joy of your heart, and your portion for ever!

THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY.

A

SERMON

ON 2 THESS. ii. 7.

The mystery of iniquity doth already work.

1. WITHOUT inquiring how far these words refer to any particular event in the Christian church, I would at present take occasion from them, to consider that important question, in what manner *the mystery of iniquity* hath *wrought* among us, till it hath wellnigh covered the whole earth.

2. It is certain, that *God made man upright*, perfectly holy and perfectly happy. But by rebelling against God, he destroyed himself, lost the favour and the image of God, and entailed sin, with its attendant, pain, on himself and all his posterity. Yet his merciful Creator did not leave him in this helpless, hopeless state. He immediately appointed his Son, his well-beloved Son, "who is the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, (to be the Saviour of men,) the propitiation for the sins of the whole world:" the great physician, who by his almighty Spirit, should heal the sickness of their souls, and restore them not only to the favour, but to the "image of God, wherein they were created."

3. This great *mystery of godliness* began to work from the very time of the original promise. Accordingly the Lamb being (in the purpose of God) "slain from the beginning of the world," from the same period his sanctifying Spirit began to renew the souls of men. We have an undeniable instance of this in Abel, who *obtained a testimony* from God *that he was righteous*, Heb. xi. 4. And from that very time all that were partakers of the same faith, were partakers of the same salvation; were not only

reinstated in the favour, but likewise restored to the image of God.

4. But how exceeding small was the number of these, even from the earliest ages? No sooner did "the sons of men multiply upon the face of the earth," than God looking down from heaven, "saw that the wickedness of man was great upon earth:" so great, that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was evil, only evil, and that continually:" Gen. vi. 1—5. And so it remained without any intermission, till God executed that terrible sentence, "I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth," ver. 7.

5. "Only Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, being a just man and perfect in his generation." Him therefore, with his wife, his sons, and their wives, God preserved from the general destruction. And one might have imagined, that this small remnant, would likewise have been *perfect in their generations*. But how far was this from being the case? Presently after this signal deliverance, we find one of them, Ham, involved in sin, and under his father's curse. And how did the mystery of iniquity afterwards work, not only in the posterity of Ham, but in the posterity of Japhet; yea, and of Shem, Abraham and his family only excepted?

6. Yea, how did it work even in the posterity of Abraham, in God's chosen people? Were not these also down to Moses, to David, to Malachi, to Herod the great, "a faithless and stubborn generation? A sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, continually forsaking the Lord, and provoking the Holy One of Israel?" And yet we have no reason to believe, that these were worse than the nations that surrounded them, who were universally swallowed up in all manner of wickedness, as well as in damna-

ble idolatries, not having the God of heaven *in all their thoughts*, but working all uncleanness with greediness.

7. In the fulness of time, when iniquity of every kind, when ungodliness and unrighteousness had spread over all nations, and covered the earth as a flood: it pleased God to lift up a standard against it, by "bringing his first-begotten into the world." Now then, one would expect, the mystery of godliness would totally prevail over the mystery of iniquity. The Son of God would be "a light to lighten the Gentiles, (as well as) salvation to his people Israel." All Israel, one would think, yea, and all the earth would soon be filled with the glory of the Lord. Nay: the mystery of iniquity prevailed still, wellnigh over the face of the earth. How exceeding small was the number of those whose souls were healed by the Son of God himself? "When Peter stood up in the midst of them, the number of names was about a hundred and twenty." Acts i. 15. And even these were but imperfectly healed: the chief of them being a little before so weak in faith, that though they did not, like Peter, forswear their Master, yet "they all forsook him and fled." A plain proof that the sanctifying "Spirit was not (then) given, (because) Jesus was not glorified."

8. It was then when he had *ascended up on high, and led captivity captive*, that *the promise of the Father* was fulfilled, (*which they had heard from* him.) It was then he began to work like himself, showing that "all power was given to him in heaven and earth. When the day of Pentecost was fully come, suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and there appeared tongues as of fire, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost," chap. ii. 1, &c. In consequence of this, three thousand

souls received *medicine to heal their sickness*, were restored to the favour and the image of God, under one sermon of St. Peter, chap. ii. ver. 41. "And the Lord added to them daily (not such as should be saved," a manifest perversion of the text, but) such as were saved. The expression is peculiar; and so indeed is the position of the words, which run thus, "And the Lord added those that were saved, daily to the church." First, *they were saved* from the power of sin; then *they were added* to the assembly of the faithful.

9. In order clearly to see how they were already saved, we need only observe the short account of them, which is recorded in the latter part of the second, and in the fourth chapter. "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and in the fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers:" that is, They were daily taught by the Apostles, and had all things common, and daily received the Lord's Supper, and attended all the public service, chap. ii. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common: And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need," chap. ii. 44, 45. And again. "The multitude of them that believed, (now greatly increased,) were of one heart and of one soul. Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common," chap. iv. 32. And yet again. "Great grace was upon them all; neither was there any among them that lacked. For as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold: and laid it at the Apostles' feet. And distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need," ver. 33, 34, 35.

10. But here a question will naturally occur. How came they to act thus, to have all things in common, seeing we do not read of any positive command to do this? I answer, there needed no outward command: the command was written on their hearts. It naturally and necessarily resulted from the degree of love which they enjoyed. Observe; "They were of one heart, and of one soul: and not so much as one (so the words run) said (they could not, while their hearts so overflowed with love,) that any of the things which he possessed was his own." And whereso-ever the same cause shall prevail, the same effect will naturally follow.

11. Here was the dawn of the proper gospel-day. Here was a proper Christian church. It was now the Sun of righteousness rose upon the earth, with healing in his wings. He did now save his people from their sins: he healed all their sickness. He not only taught that religion, which is the true healing of the soul, but effectually planted it in the earth; filling the souls of all that believed in him with *righteousness* gratitude to God and good will to man, attended with a *peace* that surpassed all understanding, and with *joy* unspeakable and full of glory.

12. But how soon did *the mystery of iniquity* work again and obscure the glorious prospect! It began to work (not openly indeed, but covertly) in two of the Christians, Annanias and Saphira. They sold their possession, like the rest, and probably from the same motive. But afterwards giving place to the devil; and reasoning with flesh and blood, they kept back part of the price. See the first Christians, that made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience! The first that drew back to perdition: instead of continuing to believe to the final salvation of the soul. Mark the first plague which infected the Christian

church! namely, the love of money! And will it not be the grand plague in all generations, whenever God shall revive the same work? O ye believers in Christ, take warning! Whether you are yet but little children, or young men, that are strong in the faith. See the snare! *Your* snare in particular! That which you will be peculiarly exposed to, after you have escaped from gross pollutions. *Love* not the world, neither the things of the world. *If any man love the world*, whatever he was in times past, *the love of the Father is not* now *in him*.

13. However, this plague was stayed in the first Christian church by instantly cutting off the infected persons. By that signal judgment of God on the first offenders, great fear came upon all, (Acts v. 11.) so that, for the present at least, not one dared to follow their example. Meantime *believers*, men full of faith and love, who rejoiced to have all things in common, "were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women," ver. 14.

14. If we inquire in what manner the mystery of iniquity, the energy of Satan began to work again in the Christian church, we shall find it wrought in quite a different way, putting on quite another shape. Partiality crept in among the Christian believers. Those by whom the distribution to every one was made, had respect of persons, largely supplying those of their own nation, while the other *widows*, who were not Hebrews, were neglected in the daily administration, chap. vi. 1. Distribution was not made to them according as every one had need. Here was a manifest breach of brotherly love in the Hebrews, a sin both against justice and mercy: seeing the Grecians, as well as the Hebrews, had sold all they had, and laid the price at the Apostles' feet. See the second plague that broke in upon the Chris-

tian church! Partiality: respect of persons, too much regard for those of our own side, and too little for others, though equally worthy.

15. The infection did not stop here, but one evil produced many more. From partiality in the Hebrews there arose in the Grecians a murmuring: not only discontent and resentful thoughts, but words suitable thereto; unkind expressions, hard speeches, evil-speaking and backbiting naturally followed. And by the *root of bitterness* thus *springing up*, undoubtedly *many were defiled*. The Apostles indeed soon found out a means of removing the occasion of this murmuring; yet so much of the evil root remained, that God saw it needful to use a severer remedy. He let loose the world upon them all, if haply by their suffering, by the spoiling of their goods, by pain, imprisonment, and death itself, he might at once punish and amend them. And persecution, God's last remedy for a backsliding people, had the happy effect for which he intended it. Both the partiality of the Hebrews ceased, and the murmuring of the Grecians. And *then had the churches rest: and were edified*, built up in the love of God and one another: "And walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied," Acts ix. 31.

16. It seems to have been some time after this, that the mystery of iniquity began to work in the form of *zeal*. Great troubles arose by means of some who zealously contended for circumcision and the rest of the ceremonial law, till the Apostles and elders put an end to the spreading evil, by that final determination, "It seemed good unto the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay on you no greater burden than these necessary things, that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled,

and from fornication," chap. xv. 28, 29. Yet was not this evil so thoroughly suppressed, but that it frequently broke out again, as we learn from various parts of St. Paul's epistles, particularly that to the Galatians.

17. Nearly allied to this was another grievous evil, which at the same time sprang up in the church, want of mutual forbearance, and of consequence, anger, strife, contention, variance. One very remarkable instance of this we find in this very chapter. When "Paul said to Barnabas, Let us visit our brethren where we have preached the word, Barnabas determined to take with him John, because he was his sister's son. But Paul thought it not good to take him who had deserted them before." And he had certainly reason on his side. But Barnabas resolved to have his own way. *Egeneto oun paroxusmos.* "And there was a fit of anger." It does not say on St. Paul's side. Barnabas only had passion to supply the want of reason. Accordingly he departed from the work, and went home, while St. Paul went (forward) through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, ver. 41.

18. The very first society of Christians at Rome were not altogether free from this evil leaven. There were *divisions and offences* among them also: (chap. xvi. 17.) although in general they seem to have *walked in love.* But how early did the mystery of iniquity work, and how powerfully in the church at Corinth? Not only *schisms* and *heresies*, animosities, fierce and bitter contention were among them, but open actual sins; yea, "such fornication as was not named among the heathen." (1 Cor. v. 1.) Nay, there was need to remind them that *neither adulterers, nor thieves, nor drunkards*, could *enter into the kingdom of heaven.* (chap. vi. 9, 10.) And in all St.

Paul's epistles we meet with abundant proof, that tares grew up with the wheat in all the churches; and that the mystery of iniquity did every where in a thousand forms counter-work the mystery of godliness.

19. When St. James wrote his epistle, directed more immediately *to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, to the* converted Jews, the tares sown among his wheat had produced a plentiful harvest. That grand pest of Christianity, a faith without works, was spread far and wide, filling the church with a wisdom from beneath, which was *earthly, sensual, devilish;* and which gave rise, not only to rash judging and evil speaking, but to "envy, strife, confusion, and every evil work." Indeed, whoever peruseth the fourth and fifth chapters of this epistle with serious attention, will be inclined to believe, that even in this early period, the tares had nigh choked the wheat: and that among most of those to whom St. James wrote, no more than the form of godliness, if so much, was left.

20. St. Peter wrote about the same time, to *the strangers*, the Christians, *scattered abroad through* all those spacious provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, (Minor) and Bithynia. These probably were some of the most eminent Christians that were then in the world. Yet how exceeding far were even these from being *without spot and blemish?* And what grievous tares were here also growing up with the wheat? Some of them were "bringing in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them." (2 Pet. ii. ver. 1, &c.) And *many followed their pernicious ways*, of whom the Apostle gives that terrible character. They "walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness, like brute beasts: made to be taken and destroyed. Spots they are

and blemishes, while they feast with you, (in the feasts of charity, then celebrated throughout the whole church :) Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, for whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever." And yet these very men were called Christians. And were even then in the bosom of the church! Nor does the Apostle mention them as infesting any one particular church only; but as a general plague which even then was dispersed far and wide among all the Christians to whom he wrote.

21. Such is the authentic account of the mystery of iniquity, working even in the apostolic churches! An account given, not by the Jews, or Heathens, but by the Apostles themselves. To this we may add the account which is given by the head and founder of the church: him "who holds the stars in his right hand, who is the faithful and true witness." We may easily infer what was the state of the church in general, from the state of the seven churches in Asia. One of these indeed, the church of Philadelphia, had "kept his word, and had not denied his name." Rev. iii. 8. The church of Smyrna was likewise in a flourishing state; but all the rest were corrupted more or less. Insomuch that several of them were not a jot better than the present race of Christians: and our Lord then threatened, what he has long since performed, to *remove the candlestick* from them.

22. Such was the real state of the Christian church, even during the first century. While not only St. John, but most of the Apostles were present with, and presided over it. But what a mystery is this? That the All-wise, the All-gracious, the Almighty, should suffer it so to be! Not in one only, but as far as we can learn, in every Christian society, those

of Smyrna and Philadelphia excepted. And how came these to be excepted? Why were these less corrupted (to go no farther) than the other churches of Asia? It seems, because they were less wealthy. The Christians in Philadelphia were not literally *increased in goods*, like those in Ephesus or Laodicea: and if the Christians at Smyrna had acquired more wealth, it was swept away by persecution. So that these having less of this world's goods, retained more of the simplicity and purity of the Gospel.

23. But how contrary is this scriptural account of the ancient Christians, to the ordinary apprehensions of men! We have been apt to imagine, that the primitive church was all excellence and perfection! Answerable to that strong description which St. Peter cites from Moses; "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." And such without all doubt, the first Christian church which commenced at the day of pentecost, was. But how soon did the fine gold become dim? How soon was the wine mixed with water? How little time elapsed, before the god of this world so far regained his empire, that Christians in general were scarce distinguishable from Heathens, save by their opinions and modes of worship.

24. And if the state of the church in the very first century was so bad, we cannot suppose it was any better in the second. Undoubtedly it grew worse and worse. Tertullian, one of the most eminent Christians of that age, has given us an account of it in various parts of his writings: whence we learn, that real, internal religion was hardly found: nay, that not only the *tempers* of the Christians were exactly the same with those of their Heathen neighbours, (pride, passion, love of the world, reigning alike in both,) but their lives and manners also: The bear-

ing a faithful testimony against the general corruption of Christians, seems to have raised the outcry against Montanus; and against Tertullian himself, when he was convinced that the testimony of Montanus was true. As to the heresies fathered upon Montanus, it is not easy to find what they were. I believe his grand heresy was, the maintaining that *without* inward and outward *holiness no man shall see the Lord.*

25. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, in every respect an unexceptionable witness, who flourished about the middle of the third century, has left us abundance of letters, in which he gives a large and particular account of the state of religion in his time. In reading this, one would be apt to imagine, he was reading an account of the present century; so totally void of true religion were the generality both of the laity and clergy: so immersed in ambition, envy, covetousness, luxury, and all other vices, that the Christians of Afric were then exactly the same as the Christians of England are now.

26. It is true, that during this whole period, during the first three centuries, there were intermixed longer or shorter seasons, wherein true Christianity revived. In those seasons the justice and mercy of God let loose the Heathens upon the Christians. Many of these were then called to resist unto blood. And the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. The apostolic spirit returned: and many "counted not their lives dear unto themselves, so they might finish their course with joy." Many others were reduced to a happy poverty: and being stript of what they had loved too well, they remembered from whence they were fallen, and repented, and did their first works.

27. Persecution never did, never could give any

lasting wound to genuine Christianity. But the greatest it ever received, the grand blow which was struck at the very root of that humble, gentle, patient love, which is the fulfilling of the Christian law, the whole essence of true religion, was struck in the fourth century by Constantine the great, when he called himself a Christian, and poured in a flood of riches, honours, and power upon the Christians, more especially upon the clergy. Then was fulfilled in the Christian church what Sallust says of the people of Rome: *Sublata imperii aemula, non sensim sed praeciptii cursu, a virtutibus descitum, ad vitia transcursum.* Just so, when the fear of persecution was removed, and wealth and honour attended the Christian profession, the Christians did not gradually sink, but rushed headlong into all manner of vices. Then the mystery of iniquity was no more hid, but stalked abroad in the face of the sun. Then, not the golden, but the iron age of the church commenced: then one might truly say,

Protinus irrupit venæ pejoris in aevum
Omne nefas; fugere pudor, verumq; fidesq;
In quorum subiere locum fraudesq; dolique,
Insidiaeque, et vis, et amor sceletarus habendi.

At once in that unhappy age broke in
All wickedness and every deadly sin:
Truth, modesty, and love fled far away,
And force, and thirst of gold claim'd universal sway.

28. And this is the event, which most Christian expositors mention with such triumph! Yea, which some of them suppose to be typified in the Revelation, by "the New Jerusalem coming down from hea-

ven ?" Rather say, it was the coming of Satan and all his legions from the bottomless pit : seeing from that very time he hath set up his throne over the face of the whole earth, and reigned over the Christian, as well as the Pagan world, with hardly any control. Historians indeed tell us very gravely, of nations in every century, who were by such and such (*saints* without doubt !) converted to Christianity. But still these converts practised all kind of abominations, exactly as they did before : no way differing either in their tempers or in their lives from the nations that were still called Heathens. Such has been the deplorable state of the Christian church, from the time of Constantine till the reformation. A Christian nation, a Christian city, (according to the scriptural mode) was no where to be seen : but every city and country, a few individuals excepted, were plunged in all manner of wickedness.

29. Has the case been altered since the reformation ? Does the mystery of iniquity no longer work in the church ? No. The reformation itself has not extended to above one third of the western church. So that two thirds of this remain as they were ; so do the eastern, southern, and northern churches. They are as full of heathenish, or worse than heathenish abominations as ever they were before. And what is the condition of the reformed churches ? It is certain that they were reformed in their opinions, as well as their modes of worship. But is not this all ? Were either their tempers or lives reformed ? Not at all. Indeed many of the Reformers themselves complained, that "the reformation was not carried far enough." But what did they mean ? Why, that they did not sufficiently reform the *rites* and *ceremonies* of the church. Ye fools and blind ! To fix your whole attention on the circumstantials of religion !

Your complaint ought to have been, The essentials of religion were not carried far enough. You ought vehemently to have insisted on an entire change of men's tempers and lives; on their showing that they had the mind that was in Christ, by walking as he also walked. Without this how exquisitely trifling was the reformation of opinions, and rites, and ceremonies? Now let any one survey the state of Christianity in the reformed parts of Switzerland; in Germany or France; in Sweden, Denmark, Holland; in Great Britain and Ireland. How little are any of these reformed countries better than heathen nations? Have they more, (I will not say communion with God, although there is no Christianity without it) but have they more justice, mercy, or truth, than the inhabitants of China or Indostan? O no! We must acknowledge with sorrow and shame, that we are far beneath them!

That we who by thy name are nam'd,
The Heathens unbaptiz'd outsin!

30. Is not this the *falling away* or *apostacy* from God, foretold by St. Paul in his second epistle to the Thessalonians? (chap. ii. ver. 3.) Indeed I would not dare to say, with George Fox, that this apostacy was universal: that there were never any real Christians in the world, from the days of the Apostles till his time. But we may boldly say, that wherever Christianity has spread, the apostacy has spread also. Insomuch that although there are now, and always have been individuals, who were real Christians, yet the whole world never did, nor can at this day, show a Christian country or city.

31. I would now refer it to every man of reflection, who believes the scriptures to be of God, whe-

ther this general apostacy does not imply the necessity of a general reformation? Without allowing this, how can we possibly justify either the wisdom or goodness of God? According to scripture, the Christian religion was designed for *the healing of the nations;* for the saving from sin, by means of the second Adam, all that were *constituted sinners* by the first. But it does not answer this end: it never did, unless for a short time at Jerusalem. What can we say, but that if it *has not* yet, it surely *will* answer it. The time is coming, when not only "all Israel shall be saved, but the fulness of the Gentiles will come in." The time cometh, when "violence shall no more be heard in the earth, wasting or destruction within our borders;" but every city shall "call her walls salvation, and her gates praise:" when the people, saith the Lord, "Shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever; the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified." Isaiah lx. 18, 21.

32. From the preceding considerations we may learn the full answer to one of the grand objections of infidels against Christianity, namely, *The lives of Christians.* Of Christians, do you say? I doubt whether you ever knew a *Christian* in your life. When Tomo Chachi, the Indian chief, keenly replied to those who spoke to him of being a Christian. "Why these are *Christians* at Savannah! These are *Christians* at Frederica!" The proper answer was, "No, they are not: they are no more Christians than you and *Sinauky.*" "But are not these Christians in Canterbury, in London, in Westminster?" No, no more than they are angels. None are Christians, but they that have the mind which was in Christ, and walk as he walked. "Why, if these only are Christians," said an eminent wit, "I

never saw a Christian yet." I believe it: you never did. And perhaps you never will. For you will never find them in the grand or the gay world. The few Christians that are upon the earth are only to be found where *you* never look for them. Never therefore urge this objection more; never object to Christianity the lives or tempers of Heathens. Though they are *called* Christians, the name doth not imply the thing; they are as far from this as hell from heaven.

33. We may learn from hence, secondly, the extent of the fall, the astonishing spread of original corruption. What, among so many thousands, so many millions, is there none righteous, no not one? Not by nature. But including the grace of God, I will not say with the Heathen poet.

> Rari quippe boni, numero vix totidem quot
> Thebarum portae, vel divitis ostia Nili.

As if he had allowed too much, in supposing there were a hundred good men in the Roman empire, he comes to himself, and affirms, there are hardly seven. Nay, surely there were seven thousand! There were so many long ago in one small nation, where Elijah supposed there were none at all. But allowing a few exceptions, we are authorized to say, "The whole world lieth in wickedness:" yea, *in the wicked one*, (as the words properly signify.) "Yes, the whole Heathen world." Yea, and the Christian too, (so called.) For where is the difference, save in a few externals? See with your own eyes. Look into that large country, Indostan. There are Christians and heathens too. Which have more justice, mercy and truth? The Christians or the Heathens? Which are most corrupt, infernal, devilish in their

tempers and practice? The English or the Indians? Which have desolated whole countries, and clogged the rivers with dead bodies?

O sacred name of Christian! how profan'd!

O earth, earth, earth! how dost thou groan under the villanies of thy *Christian* inhabitants!

34. From many of the preceding circumstances we may learn, thirdly, what is the genuine tendency of riches: what a baleful influence they have had in all ages upon pure and undefiled religion. Not that money is an evil of itself: it is applicable to good as well as bad purposes. But nevertheless it is an undoubted truth, That the "love of money is the root of all evil:" and also that the possession of riches naturally breeds the love of them. Accordingly it is an old remark.

Crescit amor nummi, quantum ipsa pecunia crescit.

"As money increases, so does the love of it," and always will, without a miracle of grace. Although therefore other causes may concur, yet this has been in all ages the principal cause of the decay of true religion in every Christian community. As long as the Christians in any place were poor, they were devoted to God. While they had little of the world, they did not love the world: but the more they had of it, the more they loved it. This constrained the lover of their souls, at various times to unchain their persecutors, who by reducing them to their former poverty, reduced them to their former purity. But still remember, riches have in all ages been the bane of genuine Christianity.

35. We may learn hence, fourthly, How great

watchfulness they need, who desire to be real Christians, considering what a state the world is in! May not each of them well say,

"Into a world of ruffians sent,
I walk on hostile ground:
Wild human bears on slaughter bent,
And rav'ning wolves surround."

They are the more dangerous, because they commonly appear in sheep's clothing. Even those who do not pretend to religion, yet make fair professions of good-will, of readiness to serve us, and perhaps of truth and honesty. But beware of taking their word. Trust not any man, until he fears God. It is a great truth,

"He that fears no God, can love no friend!"

Therefore stand upon your guard against every one that is not earnestly seeking to save his soul. We have need to keep both our heart and mouth as with a bridle, while the ungodly are in our sight. Their conversation, their spirit is infectious, and steals upon us unawares, we know not how. Happy is the man that feareth always in this sense also, lest he should partake of other men's sins! "O keep thyself pure! Watch and pray, that thou enter not into temptation!"

36. We may learn from hence, lastly, what thankfulness becomes those who have escaped the corruption that is in the world, whom God hath chosen out of the world, to be holy and unblameable. "Who is it that maketh thee to differ? And what hast thou which thou hast not received? Is it not God alone who worketh in thee both to will and to do of

his good pleasure? And let those give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed and delivered from the hand of the enemy." Let us praise him, that he hath given us to see the deplorable state of all that are round about us: to see the wickedness which overflows the earth, and yet not be borne away by the torrent! We see the general, the almost universal contagion; and yet it cannot approach to hurt us! Thanks be unto him "who hath delivered us from so great a death, and doth still deliver!" And have we not farther ground for thankfulness, yea, and strong consolation, in the blessed hope which God hath given us, that the time is at hand, when righteousness shall be as universal, as unrighteousness is now? Allowing that "*the whole creation now groaneth together*," under the sin of man; our comfort is, it will not always groan: God will arise and maintain his own cause. And the whole creation shall then be delivered both from moral and natural corruption. Sin, and its consequence, pain, shall be no more: holiness and happiness will cover the earth. Then shall all the ends of the world see the salvation of our God. And the whole race of mankind shall know, and love, and serve God, and reign with him for ever and ever.

THE END OF CHRIST'S COMING.

A

SERMON

ON 1 JOHN v. 8.

For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

1. MANY eminent writers, Heathen as well as Christian; both in earlier and later ages, have employed their utmost labour and art, in painting the beauty of virtue. And the same pains they have taken to describe, in the liveliest colours, the deformity of vice; both of vice in general, and of those particular vices which were most prevalent in their respective ages and countries. With equal care they have placed in a strong light, the happiness that attends virtues, and the misery which usually accompanies vice, and always follows it. And it may be acknowledged, that treatises of this kind are not wholly without their use. Probably hereby some on the one hand have been stirred up, to desire and follow after virtue, and some on the other hand, checked in their career of vice; perhaps reclaimed from it, at least for a season. But the change effected in men by these means, is seldom either deep or universal. Much less is it durable: in a little space, it vanishes away as the morning cloud. Such motions are far too feeble to overcome the numberless temptations that surround us. All that can be said of the beauty and advantage of virtue, and the deformity and ill effects of vice, cannot resist, and much less overcome and heal one irregular appetite or passion.

> "All these fences, and their whole array,
> One cunning bosom sin sweeps quite away."

2. There is therefore an absolute necessity, if ever we would conquer vice, or steadily persevere in the practice of virtue, to have arms of a better kind than these, otherwise we may *see* what is right, but we cannot attain it. Many of the men of reflection among the very Heathens, were deeply sensible of this. The language of their heart was that of Medea;

Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.

How exactly agreeing with the words of the Apostle, (personating a man convinced of sin, but not yet conquering it,) "*The good that I would, I do not; but the evil I would not, that I do.*" The impotence of the human mind, even the Roman philosopher could discover. "There is in every man, says he, this weakness; (he might have said, this sore disease,) *Gloriae sitis*, thirst for glory. Nature points out the disease: but nature shows us no remedy."

3. Nor is it strange that though they sought for a remedy, yet they found none. For they sought it where it never was, and never will be found, namely, in themselves, in reason: in philosophy: broken reeds! bubbles! smoke! They did not seek it in God, in whom alone it is possible to find it: in God! No, they totally disclaim this: and that in the strongest terms. For although Cicero, one of their oracles, once stumbled upon that strange truth, *Nemo unquam vir magnus sine afflatu divino fuit;* (there never was any great man, who was not divinely inspired.) Yet in the very same tract he contradicts himself, and totally overthrows his own assertion, by asking, *Quis pro virtute aut sapientia gratias dedit Deis unquam?* Whoever returned thanks to God for his virtue or wisdom? The *Roman* Poet is, (if pos-

sible) more express still: who, after mentioning several outward blessings, honestly adds,

Haec satis est orare Jovem, quae dona det, aufert:
Det vitam, det opes: Æquum mi animum ipse parabo.

We ask of God, what he can give or take:
Life, wealth: but virtuous I myself will make.

4. The best of them either sought virtue partly from God, and partly from themselves: or sought it from those gods, who were indeed but devils, and so not likely to make their votaries better than themselves. So dim was the light of the wisest of men, till *life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel; till the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.*

But what are *the works of the devil* here mentioned? How was *the Son of God manifested* to destroy them? And how, in what manner, and by what steps, does he actually destroy them? These three very important points we may consider in their order.

I. And first, what these works of the devil are, we learn from the words preceding and following the text. *We know that he was manifested, to take away our sins*, ver. 5. *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, seeth him not, neither knoweth him*, ver. 6. *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*, ver. 8. *Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin*, ver. 9. From the whole of this it appears, that *the works of the devil* here spoken of, are sin and the fruits of sin.

2. But since the wisdom of God has now dissipa-

ted the clouds which so long covered the earth, and put an end to the childish conjectures of men, concerning these things, it may be of use to take a more distinct view of these *works of the devil*, so far as the oracles of God instruct us. It is true, the design of the Holy Spirit was to assist our faith, not gratify our curiosity. And therefore the account he has given in the first chapter of Genesis, is exceeding short. Nevertheless it is so clear, that we may learn therefrom whatsoever it concerns us to know.

3. To take the matter from the beginning, *The Lord God*, (literally *Jehovah the Gods;* that is, One and three) *created man in his own image:* in his own *natural* image, (as to his better part) that is, a Spirit, as God is a Spirit: endued with *understanding*, which if not the essence, seems to be the most essential property of a Spirit. And probably the human spirit, like angelical, then discerned truth by intuition. Hence he named every creature as soon as he saw it according to its inmost nature. Yet his knowledge was limited, as he was a creature: ignorance therefore was inseparable from him. But error was not: it does not appear that he was mistaken in any thing. But he was capable of mistaking, of being deceived, although not necessitated to it.

4. He was endued also with a *will*, with various affections, (which are only the will exerting itself various ways,) that he might love, desire and delight in that which is good; otherwise his understanding had been to no purpose. He was likewise endued with *liberty*, a power of choosing what was good, and refusing what was not so. Without this, both the will and the understanding would have been utterly useless. Indeed without liberty man had been so far from being a *free agent* that he could have been no *agent* at all. For every *unfree being* is purely

passive, not active in any degree. Have you a sword in your hand? Does a man stronger than you seize your hand, and force you to wound a third person? In this you are no agent, any more than the sword: the hand is as passive as the steel. So in every possible case. He that is not free is not an *agent* but a *patient*.

5. It seems therefore that every spirit in the universe, as such, is endued with *understanding*, and in consequence with a will and with a measure of *liberty:* and that these three are inseparably united, in every intelligent nature. And observe: *liberty necessitated*, or over-ruled, is really no liberty at all. It is a contradiction in terms. It is the same as *unfree freedom;* that is, downright nonsense.

6. It may be farther observed, (and it is an important observation,) that where there is no liberty, there can be no moral good or evil, no virtue or vice. The fire warms us, yet it is not capable of virtue; it burns us, yet this is no vice. There is no virtue, but where an intelligent being knows, loves and chooses what is good: nor is there any vice, but where such a being knows, loves, and chooses what is evil.

7. And God created man, not only in his *natural*, but likewise in his own *moral* image. He created him not only *in knowledge*, but also in righteousness, and true holiness. As his understanding was without blemish, perfect in its kind, so were all his affections. They were all set right, and duly exercised on their proper objects. And as a free agent, he steadily chose whatever was good, according to the direction of his understanding. In so doing he was unspeakably happy, dwelling in God and God in him, having an uninterrupted fellowship with the Father and the Son, through the eternal Spirit. And

the continual testimony of his conscience, that all his ways were good and acceptable to God.

8. Yet his liberty, (as was observed before) necessarily included a power of choosing or refusing either good or evil. Indeed it has been doubted, whether man could then choose evil, knowing it to be such. But it cannot be doubted, he might mistake evil for good. He was not infallible; therefore not impeccable. And this unravels the whole difficulty of the grand question, *Unde Malum?* "How came evil into the world?" It came from *Lucifer, son of the morning:* it was the *work of the devil, for the devil*, saith the Apostle, *sinneth from the beginning:* that is, was the first sinner in the universe: the author of sin; the first being, who by the abuse of his liberty, introduced evil into the creation.

He, "of the first,
If not the first Arch-angel,"

was self-tempted to think too highly of himself. He freely yielded to the temptation, and gave way first to pride, then to self-will. He said, "I will sit upon the sides of the north: I will be like the Most High." He did not fall alone: but soon drew after him a third part of the stars of heaven: in consequence of which they lost their glory and happiness, and were driven from their former habitation.

9. *Having great wrath*, and perhaps envy at the happiness of the creatures whom God had newly created, it is not strange that he should desire and endeavour to deprive them of it. In order to this, he concealed himself in the serpent, who was *the most subtle*, or intelligent of all the brute creatures, and on that account, the least liable to raise suspicion. Indeed some have (not improbably) supposed, that

the serpent was then endued with reason and speech. Had not Eve known he was so, would she have admitted any parley with him? Would she not have been frighted rather than deceived? (as the Apostle observes she was.) To deceive her, Satan mingled truth with falsehood: "Hath God said, ye may not eat of every tree of the garden?" And soon after persuaded her to disbelieve God, to suppose his threatening should not be fulfilled. She then lay open to the whole temptation; to "the desire of the flesh; for the tree was good for food: to the desire of the eyes; for it was pleasant to the eyes; and to the pride of life; for it was to be desired to make one wise," and consequently honoured. So unbelief begot pride. She thought herself wiser than God, capable of finding a better way to happiness than God had taught her. It begot self-will: She was determined to do her own will, not the will of him that made her. It begot foolish desires, and completed all by outward sin: *she took the fruit thereof and did eat.*

10. She then *gave to her husband and he did eat.* And *in that day*, yea, that moment, he *died.* The life of God was extinguished in his soul. The glory departed from him. He lost the whole moral image of God, righteousness and true holiness. He was unholy; he was unhappy: he was full of sin, full of guilt and tormenting fears. Being broke off from God, and looking upon him now as an angry judge, *he was afraid.* But how was his understanding darkened, to think he could *hide himself from the presence of the Lord, among the trees of the garden?* Thus was his soul utterly dead to God! And in that day his body likewise began to die; because obnoxious to weakness, sickness, pain: all preparatory

to the death of the body, which naturally led to eternal death.

II. Such are *the works of the devil*, sin and its fruits, considered in their order and connexion. We are in the second place to consider, How *the Son of God was manifested*, in order to destroy them.

1. He was manifested as the only-begotten Son of God, in glory equal with the Father, to the inhabitants of heaven, before and at the foundation of the world. These morning-stars sang together, all these sons of God shouted for joy," when they heard him pronounce, " Let there be light, and there was light ;" when he "spread the north over the empty space, and stretched out the heavens as a curtain." Indeed it was the universal belief of the ancient church, that God the Father none hath seen, nor can see : that from all eternity, he hath dwelt in light unapproachable : and it is only in and by the Son of his love, that he hath at any time revealed himself to his creatures.

2. How the Son of God was manifested to our first parents in Paradise, it is not easy to determine. It is generally, and not improperly supposed, that he appeared to them in the form of a man, and conversed with them face to face. Not that I can at all believe the ingenious dream of Dr. Watts, concerning " The glorious humanity of Christ," which he supposes to have existed before the world began, and to have been endued with, I know not what astonishing powers. Nay, I look upon this, to be an exceeding dangerous, yea, mischievous hypothesis ; as it quite excludes the force of very many scriptures, which have been hitherto thought to prove the Godhead of the Son. And I am afraid it was the grand means of turning that great man aside

from the faith once delivered to the saints; that is, if he was turned aside, if that beautiful soliloquy be genuine, which is printed among his posthumous works, wherein he so earnestly beseeches the Son of God not to be displeased, "Because he cannot believe him to be coequal and coeternal with the Father."

3. May we not reasonably believe it was by similar appearances that he was manifested in succeeding ages, to Enoch while he *walked with* God; to Noah, before and after the deluge; to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, on various occasions: and to mention no more, to Moses. This seems to be the natural meaning of the word; "My servant Moses is faithful in all my house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches: and the similitude of Jehovah shall he behold," namely, the Son of God.

4. But all these were only types of his grand manifestation. It was in the fulness of time (in just the middle age of the world, as a great man largely proves,) that God "brought his first-begotten into the world, made of a woman," by the power of the Highest overshadowing her. He was afterwards manifested to the shepherds: to devout Simeon: to Anna the prophetess; and to *all that waited for redemption in Jerusalem.*

5. When he was of due age for executing his priestly office he was manifested to Israel, "preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, in every town, and in every city," and for a time he was glorified by all, who acknowledged, that he *spake as never man spake:* that he *spake as one having authority*, with all the wisdom of God, and the power of God. He was manifested by numberless *signs and wonders; and mighty works which he did:* as well

as by his whole life, being the only one born of a woman *who knew no sin;* who from his birth to his death, *did all things well*, doing continually *not his own will, but the will of him that sent him.*

6. After all, "behold the lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world!" This was a more glorious manifestation of himself than any he had made before. How wonderfully was he manifested to angels and men, when he *was wounded for* our *transgressions*, when he *bore all our sins in his own body on the tree:* when, having by that one oblation of himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, he cried out "It is finished: and bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." We need but just mention those farther manifestations, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven, into the glory which he had before the world began; and his pouring out the Holy Ghost on the day of pentecost: both of which are beautifully described in those well known words of the Psalmist: "He hath ascended up on high; he hath led captivity captive; he hath received gifts for men: yea, even for his enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among, or in them."

7. That the Lord God might dwell in them. This refers to a yet farther manifestation of the Son of God, even his inward manifestation of himself. When he spoke of this to his Apostles, but a little before his death, one of them immediately asked, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?" By enabling us to believe in his name. For he is then inwardly manifested to us, when we are enabled to say with confidence, "My Lord and my God!" Then each of us can boldly say, "The life which I now live, I live by

faith in the Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*." And it is by thus manifesting himself in our hearts, that he effectually destroys the works of the devil.

III. 1. How he does this, in what manner, and by what steps he does actually destroy them, we are now to consider. And first, as Satan began his first work in Eve, by tainting her with unbelief, so the Son of God begins his work in man, by enabling us to believe in him. He both opens and enlightens the eyes of our understanding. Out of darkness he commands light to shine and takes away the vail which the god of this world had spread over our hearts. And we then see, not by a chain of *reasoning*, but by a kind of *intuition*, by a direct view, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to them their former trespasses," not imputing them to *me*. In that day "we know that we are of God," children of God by faith, "having redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins. Being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:" that peace which enables us in every state therewith to be content; which delivers us from all perplexing doubts, from all tormenting fears and in particular from that fear of death, whereby we were all our life-time subject to bondage.

2. At the same time the Son of God strikes at the root of that grand work of the devil, pride: causing the sinner to humble himself before the Lord, to abhor himself as it were in dust and ashes. He strikes at the root of self-will, enabling the humbled sinner to say in all things, *Not as I will*, but as thou wilt. He destroys the love of the world, delivering them that believe in him from *every foolish and hurtful desire;*

from *the desire of the flesh*, the *desire of the eyes*, *and the pride of life*. He saves them from seeking, or expecting to find happiness in any creature. As Satan turned the heart of man, from the Creator to the creature; so the Son of God turns his heart back again from the creature to the Creator. Thus it is, by manifesting himself, he destroys the works of the devil, restoring the guilty outcast from God, to his favour, to pardon and peace, the sinner in whom dwelleth no good thing, to love and holiness; the burdened, miserable sinner, to joy unspeakable, to real, substantial happiness.

3. But it may be observed that the Son of God does not destroy the whole work of the devil in man, as long as he remains in this life. He does not yet destroy bodily weakness, sickness, pain, and a thousand infirmities incident to flesh and blood. He does not destroy all that weakness of understanding which is the natural consequence of the soul's dwelling in a corruptible body: so that still

Humanum est errare et nescire:

Both ignorance and error belong to humanity. He entrusts us with only an exceeding small share of knowledge in our present state, lest our knowledge should interfere with our humility, and we should again affect to be as gods. It is to remove from us all temptation to pride, and all thought of independency, (which is the very thing that men in general so earnestly covet, under the name of *liberty*) that he leaves us encompassed with all these infirmities, particularly weakness of understanding, till the sentence takes place, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return!"

4. Then error, pain, and all bodily infirmities

cease : all these are destroyed by death. And death itself, *the last enemy* of man, shall be destroyed at the resurrection. The moment that we hear the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, *Then shall be fulfilled the* saying that is written, *Death is swallowed up in victory. This corruptible* body *shall put on incorruption : this mortal* body *shall put on immortality :* and the Son of God manifested in the clouds of heaven, shall destroy this last work of the devil.

5. Here then we see in the clearest, strongest light, what is real religion : a restoration of man, by him that bruises the serpent's head, to all that the old serpent deprived him of : a restoration not only to the favour, but likewise to the image of God ; implying not barely deliverance from sin, but the being filled with the fulness of God. It is plain, if we attend to the preceding considerations, that nothing short of this is Christian religion. Every thing else, whether negative or external, is utterly wide of the mark. But what a paradox is this ! How little is it understood in the Christian world ? yea, in this enlightened age, wherein it is taken for granted, the world is wiser than ever it was from the beginning. Among all our discoveries, who has discovered this ? How few, either among the learned or unlearned ? And yet, if we believe the Bible, who can deny it ? Who can doubt it ? It runs through the Bible, from the beginning to the end, in one connected chain. And the agreement of every part of it with every other, is properly the *analogy* of *faith.* Beware of taking any thing else, or any thing less than this for religion. Not any thing else : do not imagine an *outward form*, a round of duties, both in public and private, is religion. Do not suppose, that honesty, justice, and whatever is called *morality*, (though excellent in its

place,) is religion. And least of all dream that orthodoxy, right opinion, (vulgarly called *faith*,) is religion. Of all religious dreams, this is the vainest which takes hay and stubble, for gold tried in the fire.

6. O do not take any thing less than this for the religion of Jesus Christ! Do not take part of it for the whole. What God hath joined together, put not asunder. Take no less for his religion, than *the faith that worketh by love*, all inward and outward holiness. Be not content with any religion which does not imply the destruction of all the works of the devil, that is, of all sin. We know, weakness of understanding, and a thousand infirmities will remain, while this corruptible body remains. But sin need not remain: this is that work of the devil, eminently so called, which the Son of God was manifested to destroy in this present life. He is able, he is willing to destroy it now, in all that believe in him. Only be not straitened in your own bowels! Do not distrust his power or his love! Put his promise to the proof! He hath spoken: and is he not ready likewise to perform? Only *come boldly to the throne of grace*, trusting in his mercy: and you shall find, "He saveth to the uttermost all those that come to God through him!"

THE GENERAL SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.

A

SERMON

ON ISAIAH xi. 9.

The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

1. IN what a condition is the world at present? How does darkness, intellectual darkness, ignorance, with vice and misery attendant upon it, cover the face of the earth! From the accurate inquiry made with indefatigable pains by our ingenious countryman, Mr. Brerewood, (who travelled himself over a great part of the known world, in order to form the more exact judgment,) supposing the world to be divided into thirty parts, nineteen of them are professed Heathens, altogether as ignorant of Christ, as if he had never come into the world. Six of the remaining parts are professed Mahometans: so that only five in thirty are so much as nominally Christians.

2. A little, and but a little above the Heathens in religion are the Mahometans. But how far and wide has this miserable delusion spread over the face of the earth? Insomuch that the Mahometans are considerably more in number, (as six to five) than Christians. And by all the accounts which have any pretence to authenticity, these are also in general, as utter strangers to all true religion, as their four-footed brethren. As void of mercy as lions and tigers, as much given up to brutal lusts as bulls or goats: so that they are in truth a disgrace to human nature, and a plague to all that are under their iron yoke.

4. It is true, a celebrated writer (Lady Mary Wortly M.) gives a very different character of them,

With the finest flow of words, in the most elegant language, she labours to wash the Æthiop white. She represents them as many degrees above the Christians, as some of the most amiable people in the world, as possessed of the social virtues, as some of the most accomplished of men. But I can in no wise receive her report: I cannot rely upon her authority. I believe those round about her had just as much religion as their admirer had, when she was admitted into the interior parts of the grand Signior's Seraglio. Notwithstanding therefore all that such a witness does or can say in their favour, I believe the Turks in general are little, if at all, better than the generality of the Heathens.

4. And little, if at all, better than the Turks, are the Christians in the Turkish dominions, even the best of them, those that live in the Morea, or are scattered up and down in Asia. The more numerous bodies of Georgian, Circassian, Mengrelian Christians, are a proverb of reproach to the Turks themselves; not only for their deplorable ignorance, but for their total, stupid, barbarous irreligion.

5. From the most authentic accounts we can obtain of the Southern Christians, those in Abyssinia, and of the Northern churches, under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Moscow, we have reason to fear they are much in the same condition both with regard to knowledge and religion, as those in Turkey. Or if those in Abyssinia are more civilized and have a larger share of knowledge, yet they do not appear to have any more religion than either the Mahometans or Pagans.

6. The Western churches seem to have the preeminence over all these in many respects. They have abundantly more knowledge: they have more scriptural and more rational modes of worship.

Yet two thirds of them are still involved in the corruptions of the church of Rome: and most of these entirely unacquainted with either the theory or practice of religion. And as to those who are called Protestants or Reformed, what acquaintance with it have they? Put Papists and Protestants, French and English together, the bulk of one, and of the other nation: and what manner of Christians are they? Are they "holy as he that hath called them is holy?" Are they filled with "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost? Is there that mind in them which was also in Christ Jesus?" And do they *walk as Christ also walked?* Nay, they are as far from it as hell is from heaven.

7. Such is the present state of mankind, in all parts of the world? But how astonishing is this, if there is a God in heaven? And if his eyes are over all the earth! Can he despise the work of his own hand? Surely this is one of the greatest mysteries under heaven! How is it possible to reconcile this with either the wisdom or goodness of God? And what can give ease to a thoughtful mind, under so melancholy a prospect? What but the consideration, that things will not always be so; that another scene will be soon opened. God will be jealous of his honour: he will arise and maintain his own cause. He will judge the prince of this world, and spoil him of his usurped dominion. He will "give his Son the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." The loving knowledge of God producing uniform, uninterrupted holiness and happiness, shall cover the earth, shall fill every soul of man.

8. "Impossible! will some men say. Yea, the

greatest of all impossbilities! That we should see a Christian world! Yea, a Christian nation, or city! How can these things be?" On one supposition indeed not only all impossibility, but all difficulty vanishes away. Only suppose the Almighty to act *irresistibly*, and the thing is done: yea, with just the same ease, as when *God said*, "Let there be light, and there was light." But then, man would be man no longer: his inmost nature would be changed. He would no longer be a moral agent, any more than the sun or the wind, as he would no longer be endued with liberty, a power of choosing or self-determination. Consequently, he would no longer be capable of virtue or vice, of reward or punishment.

9. But setting aside this clumsy way of cutting the knot, which we are not able to untie: how can all men be made holy and happy, while they continue men? While they still enjoy both the understanding, the affections, and the liberty which are essential to a moral agent? There seems to be a plain, simple way of removing this difficulty, without entangling ourselves in any subtle, metaphysical disquisitions. As God is One, so the work of God is uniform in all ages. May we not then conceive, how he *will* work on the souls of men in times to come, by considering how he *does* work *now?* And how he *has* wrought in times past?

10. Take one instance of this, and such an instance as you cannot easily be deceived in. You know how God wrought in *your own* soul, when he first enabled you to say, "The life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." He did not take away your understanding, but enlightened and strengthened it. He did not destroy any of your affections: rather they

were more vigorous than before. Least of all did he take away your liberty, your power of choosing good or evil: he did not *force* you; but being *assisted* by his grace, you, like Mary, *chose* the better part. Just so has he *assisted* five in one house to make that happy *choice:* fifty or five hundred in one city, and many thousands in a nation, without depriving any of them of that liberty, which is essential to a moral agent.

11. Not that I deny that there are exempt cases, wherein

"The o'erwhelming power of saving grace,"

Does for a time work as irresistibly as lightning falling from heaven. But I speak of God's general manner of working, of which I have known innumerable instances; perhaps more within fifty years last past, than any one in *England* or in *Europe*. And with regard even to those exempt cases: although God does work irresistibly *for the time*, yet I do not believe there is any human soul, in which God works irresistibly *at all times*. Nay, I am fully persuaded there is not. I am persuaded, there are no men living that have not many times *resisted the Holy Ghost*, and *made void the counsel of God against themselves*. Yea, I am persuaded, every child of God has had at some time, *life and death set before him*, eternal life, and eternal death, and has in himself the casting voice. So true is that well known saying of St. Austin, (one of the noblest he ever uttered,) *Qui fecit nos sine nobis, non salvabit nos sine nobus:* he that made us *without ourselves*, will not save us *without ourselves*. Now in the same manner as God *has* converted so many to himself, without destroying their liberty, he *can* undoubtedly convert whole na-

tions, or the whole world. And it is as easy to him to convert a world, as one individual soul.

12. Let us observe what God has done already.

Between fifty and sixty years ago God raised up a few young men in the University of Oxford, to testify those grand truths, which were then little attended to,

That without holiness no man shall see the Lord :

That this holiness is the work of God, who worketh in us both to will and to do :

That he doth it of his own good pleasure, merely for the merits of Christ.

That this holiness is the mind that was in Christ, enabling us to walk as he also walked :

That no man can be thus sanctified till he is justified : and

That we are justified by faith alone. These great truths they declared on all occasions in private and in public ; having no design but to promote the glory of God, and no desire but to save souls from death.

13. From Oxford, where it first appeared, the little leaven spread wider and wider. More and more saw the truth as it is in Jesus, and received it in the love thereof. More and more "found redemption through the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins." They were born again of his Spirit, and filled with righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It afterwards spread to every part of the land, and a little one became a thousand. It then spread into North-Britain and Ireland, and a few years after, into New-York, Pennsylvania, and many other provinces in America, even as high as Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia. So that although at first this "grain of mustard-seed was the least of all the seeds," yet in a few years it grew into a "large tree, and put forth great branches."

14. Generally when these truths, justification by faith in particular, were declared in any large town, after a few days or weeks, there came suddenly on the great congregation, not in a corner, (at London, Bristol, Newcastle-upon-Tyne in particular) a violent and impetuous power, which

> " Like mighty winds or torrents fierce,
> Did then opposers all o'erturn."

And this frequently continued, with shorter or longer intervals, for several weeks or months. But it gradually subsided, and then the work of God was carried on by gentle degrees: while that Spirit, in watering the seed that had been sown, in confirming and strengthening them that had believed,

> " Deigned his influence to infuse,
> Secret, refreshing as the silent dews."

And this difference in his usual manner of working, was observable not only in Great-Britain and Ireland, but in every part of America, from South to North, wherever the word of God came with power.

15. Is it not then highly probable, that God will carry on his work in the same manner as he has begun? That he will carry it on, I cannot doubt; however Luther may affirm, that a revival of religion never lasts above a generation, that is, thirty years; (whereas the present revival has already continued above fifty.) Or however prophets of evil may say, " All will be at an end, when the first instruments are removed." There will then very probably be a great shaking: but I cannot induce myself to think, that God has wrought so glorious a work, to let it

sink and die away in a few years; no, I trust, this is only the beginning of a far greater work: the dawn of *the latter day glory*.

16. And is it not probable, I say, that he will carry it on in the same manner as he has begun? At the first breaking out of this work in this or that place, there may be a shower, a torrent of grace: and so at some other particular seasons, which *the Father has reserved in his own power*. But in general, it seems the kingdom of God will not *come with observation*, but will silently increase wherever it is set up, and spread from heart to heart, from house to house, from town to town, from one kingdom to another. May it not thus spread first through the remaining provinces, then through the isles of North America? And at the same time from England to Holland; where there is already a blessed work in Utrecht, Haerlem, and many other cities? Probably it will spread from these to the Protestants in France, to those in Germany, and those in Switzerland; then to Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, and all the other Protestant nations in Europe.

17. May we not suppose that the same leaven of pure and undefiled religion, of the experimental knowledge and love of God, of inward and outward holiness, will afterwards spread to the Roman Catholics, in Great Britain, Ireland, Holland; in Germany, France, Switzerland, and in all other countries, where Romanists and Protestants live intermixt, and familiarly converse with each other? Will it not then be easy for the wisdom of God, to make a way for religion, in the life and power thereof, into those countries that are merely Popish, as Italy, Spain, Portugal? And may it not be gradually diffused from thence, to all that name the name of Christ, in the various provinces of Turkey, in Abyssinia,

yea, and in the remotest parts, not only of Europe, but of Asia, Africa, and America ?

18. And in every nation under heaven, we may reasonably believe God will observe the same order which he hath done from the beginning of Christianity. *They shall all know* me, saith *the Lord*, not from the greatest to the least: (this is that wisdom of the world, which is foolishness with God ;) but *from the least to the greatest*, that the praise may not be of men, but of God. Before the end, even the rich shall enter into the kingdom of God. Together with them will enter in the great, the noble, honourable ; yea, the rulers, the princes, the kings of the earth. Last of all, the wise and learned, the men of genius, the philosophers will be convinced that they are fools, will "be converted and become as little children, and enter into the kingdom of God."

19. Then shall be fully accomplished to *the house of Israel*, the spiritual Israel, of whatever people or nation, that gracious promise, " I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts : and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord ; for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Then shall the times of universal refreshment come from the presence of the Lord." The grand pentecost shall *fully come :* and "devout men in every nation under heaven (however distant in place from each other,) shall all be filled with the Holy Ghost." And they will " continue steadfast in the Apostles' doctrine, and in the fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

They will " eat their meat," and do all that they have to do, " with gladness and singleness of heart. *Great grace* will he *upon them all :* and they will be " all of one heart and of one soul." The natural necessary consequence of this will be the same as it was in the beginning of the Christian Church. " None of them will say, that aught of the things which he possesses is his own, but they will have all things common. Neither will there be any among them that want, for as many as are possessed of lands or houses will sell them, and distribution will be made to every man, according as he has need." All their desires, mean time, and passions, and tempers will be cast in one mould, while all are doing the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven. All their *conversation will be seasoned with salt*, and will *minister grace to the hearers*, seeing it will not be so much they that speak, *as the Spirit of their Father that speaketh in them.* And there will be no *root of bitterness springing up*, either to *defile* or trouble them. There will be no Ananias or Sapphira, to bring back the cursed love of money among them. There will be no partiality ; no *widows neglected in the daily ministration.* Consequently there will be no temptation, to any *murmuring* thought or unkind word of one against another, while,

" They all are of one heart and soul,
And only love informs the whole."

20. The grand stumbling-block being thus happily removed out of the way, namely the lives of the Christians, the *Mahometans* will look upon them with other eyes, and begin to give attention to their words. And as their words will be clothed with divine energy, attended with the demonstration of the Spirit and

of power, those of them that fear God, will soon take knowledge of the spirit whereby the Christians speak. They will receive with meekness the engrafted word, and will bring forth fruit with patience. From them the leaven will soon spread to those who till then had no fear of God before their eyes. Observing "the Christian dogs," as they used to term them, to have changed their nature, to be sober, temperate, just, benevolent, and that in spite of all provocations to the contrary, from admiring their lives, they will surely be led to consider and embrace their doctrine. And then the Saviour of sinners will say, "The hour is come. I will glorify my Father. I will seek and save the sheep that were wandering on the dark mountains. Now will I avenge myself of my enemy, and pluck the prey out of the lion's teeth. I will resume my own for ages lost: I will claim the purchase of my blood." So he will go forth in the greatness of his strength, and all his enemies shall flee before him. All the prophets of lies shall vanish away, and all the nations that had followed them, shall acknowledge the great Prophet of the Lord, "mighty in word and deed: and shall honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."

21. And then the grand stumbling-block being removed from the Heathen nations also, the same Spirit will be poured out upon them, even those that remain in the uttermost parts of the sea. The poor American savage will no more ask, "What are the Christians better than us?" When they see their steady practice of universal temperance, and of justice, mercy and truth. The Malabarian Heathen will have no more room to say, "Christian man take my wife. Christian man much drunk: Christian man kill man! *Devil-Christian!* Me no Christian." Rather, seeing how far the Christians exceed their own

countrymen, in whatsoever things are lovely and of good report, they will adopt a very different language, and say, *Angel-Christian :* The holy lives of the Christians will be an argument they will not know how to resist: seeing the Christians steadily and uniformly practise what is agreeable to the law written in their own hearts, their prejudices will quickly die away, and they will gladly receive *the truth as it is in Jesus.*

22. We may reasonably believe, that the Heathen nations which are mingled with the Christians, and those that, bordering upon Christian nations, have constant and familiar intercourse with them, will be some of the first who will learn to worship God in spirit and in truth: those for instance that live on the continent of America, or in the islands that have received colonies from Europe. Such are likewise all those inhabitants of the East-Indies that adjoin to any of the Christian settlements. To these may be added, numerous tribes of Tartars, the heathen parts of the Russias, and the inhabitants of Norway, Finland, and Lapland. Probably these will be followed by those more distant nations with whom the Christians trade: to whom they will impart what is of infinitely more value than earthly pearls, or gold and silver. The God of love will then prepare his messengers and make a way into the polar regions, into the deepest recesses of America, and into the interior parts of Africa: yea, into the heart of China and Japan, with the countries adjoining them. And *their sound will then go forth into all lands, and their voice to the ends of the earth.*

23. But one considerable difficulty still remains. There are very many Heathen nations in the world, that have no intercourse, either by trade or any other means with Christians of any kind. Such are the

inhabitants of the numerous islands in the South Sea, and probably in all large branches of the ocean. Now what shall be done for these poor outcasts of men? *How shall they believe*, saith the Apostle, *in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear, without a preacher?* You may add, *And how shall they preach unless they be sent?* Yea, but is not God able to send them? Cannot he raise them up as it were out of the stones? And can he ever want means of sending them? No: were there no other means, he can take them by his Spirit (as he did Ezekiel, chap. xxxvii. 1.) or by his angel, as he did Philip, (Acts viii.) and set them down whereso-ever it pleaseth him. Yea, he can find out a thousand ways, to foolish man unknown. And he surely will: for heaven and earth may pass away, but his word shall not pass away. He will give his Son the uttermost part of the earth for his possession.

24. "And so all Israel *too* shall be saved." For "blindness has happened to Israel," (as the great Apostle observes, Romans xi. 25, &c.) till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Then "the Deliverer that cometh out of Sion, shall turn away iniquity from Jacob. God hath now concluded them all in unbelief, that he may have mercy upon all." Yea, and he will so have mercy upon all Israel, as to give them all temporal, with all spiritual blessings. For this is the promise, "The Lord thy God will gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, Deut. xxx. 3, &c. Again, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have

driven them: and I will bring them again to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever. I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. And I will plant them in this land assuredly, with all my heart and with all my soul," Jeremiah xxii. 37, &c.

Yet again: "I will take you from among the Heathen: and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God," Ezekiel xxxvi. 24, &c.

25. At that time will be accomplished all those glorious promises made to the Christian church, which will not then be confined to this or that nation, but will include all the inhabitants of the earth. "They shall not hurt, nor destroy in all my holy mountain, Isaiah xi. 9. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise." Thou shalt be encompassed on every side with salvation, and all that go through thy gates shall praise God. "The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." The light of the sun and moon shall be swallowed up in the light of his countenance shining upon thee. "Thy people also shall be righteous; the work of my hands that I may be glorified. As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the

Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations," Isaiah lx. 18, &c.

26. This I apprehend to be the answer, yea, the only full and satisfactory answer than can be given, to the objection against the wisdom and goodness of God, taken from the present state of the world. It will not always be thus: these things are only permitted for a season, by the great Governor of the world, that he may draw immense, eternal good out of this temporary evil. This is the very key which the Apostle himself gives us in the words above recited, "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all!" In view of this glorious event, how well may we cry out, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Although for a season "his judgments were unsearchable, and his ways past finding out," Romans xi. 32, 33. It is enough, we are assured of this one point, that all these transient evils will issue well; will have a happy conclusion, and that "Mercy first and last will reign." All unprejudiced persons may see with their eyes, that he is already renewing the face of the earth. And we have strong reason to hope, that the work he hath begun, he will carry on unto the day of the Lord Jesus: he that will never intermit this blessed work of his Spirit, until he has fulfilled all his promises: until he hath put a period to sin and misery, and infirmity, and death; and re-established universal holiness and happiness, and caused all the inhabitants of the earth to sing together, "Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever!" Rev. vii. 12.

THE NEW CREATION.

A

SERMON

ON REV. xxi. 5.

Behold, I make all things new.

1. WHAT a strange scene is here opened to our view! How remote from all our natural apprehensions! Not a glimpse of what is here revealed, was ever seen in the Heathen world. Not only the modern, barbarous, uncivilized Heathens have not the least conception of it; but it was equally unknown to the refined, polished Heathens of ancient Greece and Rome. And it is almost as little thought of or understood by the generality of Christians: I mean not barely those that are nominally such, that have the form of godliness without the power; but even those that in a measure fear God and study to work righteousness.

2. It must be allowed, that after all the researches we can make, still our knowledge of the great truth which is delivered to us in these words, is exceedingly short and imperfect. As this is a point of mere revelation, beyond the reach of all our natural faculties, we cannot penetrate far into it, nor form any adequate conception of it. But it may be an encouragement to those who have in any degree tasted of the powers of the world to come, to go as far as they can go, interpreting scripture by scripture, according to the analogy of faith.

3. The Apostle, caught up in the visions of God, tells us in the first verse of the chapter, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth." And adds, ver. 5. "He that sat upon the throne said, (I believe the only words which he is said to utter throughout the whole book) behold, I make all things new."

4. Very many commentators entertain a strange opinion, that this relates only to the present state of things, and gravely tell us, that the words are to be referred to the flourishing state of the church, which commenced after the Heathen persecutions. Nay, some of them have discovered, that all which the Apostle speaks concerning the "new heaven and the new earth," was fulfilled when Constantine the great poured in riches and honours upon the Christians. What a miserable way is this of making void the whole counsel of God, with regard to all that grand chain of events, in reference to his church, yea, and to all mankind, from the time that John was in Patmos, unto the end of the world! Nay, the line of this prophecy reaches farther still. It does not end with the present world, but shows us the things that will come to pass, when this world is no more. For,

5. Thus saith the Creator and Governor of the universe, "Behold, I make all things new:" all which are included in that expression of the Apostle, "A new heaven and a new earth." *A new heaven.* The original word in Genesis (chap. i.) is in the plural number. And indeed this is the constant language of Scripture; not *heaven*, but *heavens*. Accordingly, the ancient Jewish writers are accustomed to reckon three heavens. In conformity to which, the Apostle Paul speaks of his being "caught up into the third heaven." It is this, the third heaven, which is usually supposed to be the more immediate residence of God. So far as a residence can be ascribed to his omnipresent Spirit, who pervades and fills the whole universe. It is here (if we speak after the manner of men,) that the Lord sitteth upon his throne, surrounded by angels and archangels, and by all his flaming ministers.

6. We cannot think that this heaven will undergo any change, any more than its great Inhabitant.

Surely the palace of the Most High was the same from eternity, and will be, world without end. Only the inferior heavens are liable to change; the highest of which we usually call the starry heavens. This, St. Peter informs us, "is reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and destruction of men." In that day, "being on fire, it shall first shrivel as a parchment scroll: then it shall be dissolved, and shall pass away with a great noise; lastly, it shall flee from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and there shall be found no place for it."

7. At the same time "the stars shall fall from heaven," the secret chain being broken, which had retained them in their several orbits, from the foundation of the world. In the mean while the lower, or sublunary *heaven*, with *the elements* (or principles that compose it) "shall melt with fervent heat," while "the earth, with the works that are therein shall be burnt up." This is the introduction to a far nobler state of things, such as it has not entered into the heart of men to conceive: the universal restoration which is to succeed the universal destruction. "For we look for," says the Apostle, "new heavens, and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Pet. iii. 7, &c.

8. One considerable difference there will undoubtedly be in the starry heaven, when it is created anew: there will be no blazing stars, no comets there. Whether those horrid, eccentric orbs are half-formed planets, in a chaotic state, (I speak on the supposition of a plurality of worlds) or such as have undergone their general conflagration, they will certainly have no place in the new heaven, where all will be exact order and harmony. There may be many other differences between the heaven that now is, and that which will be after the renovation. But they

are above our apprehension: we must leave eternity to explain them.

9. We may more easily conceive the changes which will be wrought in the lower heaven, in the region of the air. It will be no more torn by hurricanes, or agitated by furious storms or destructive tempests. Pernicious or terrifying meteors will have no more place therein. We shall have no more occasion to say,

"There like a trumpet, loud and strong,
Thy thunder shakes our coast:
While the red lightnings wave along,
The banners of thy host!"

No: all will then be light, fair, serene: a lively picture of the eternal day.

10. All the elements (taking that word in the common sense, from the principles of which all natural beings are compounded) will be new indeed; entirely changed as to their qualities, although not as to their nature. *Fire* is at present the general destroyer of all things under the sun; dissolving all things that come within the sphere of its action, and reducing them to their primitive atoms. But no sooner will it have performed its last great office of destroying the heavens and the earth, (whether you mean thereby one system only, or the whole fabric of the universe: the difference between one and millions of worlds being nothing before the great Creator.) When, I say, it has done this, the destructions wrought by fire will come to a perpetual end. It will destroy no more, it will consume no more; it will forget its power to burn, which it possesses only during the present state of things, and be as harmless in the new heavens and earth, as it is now

in the bodies of men and other animals, and the substance of trees and flowers: in all which (as late experiments show) large quantities of ethereal fire are lodged: if it be not rather an essential component part of every material being under the sun. But it will probably retain its vivifying power, though devested of its power to destroy.

11. It has been already observed, that the calm, placid air, will be no more disturbed by storms and tempests. There will be no more meteors, with their horrid glare, affrighting the poor children of men. May we not add, (though at first it may sound like a paradox) that there will be no more rain. It is observable, that there was none in Paradise: a circumstance which Moses particularly mentions, (Gen. ii. ver. 5, 6.) "The Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth. But there went up a mist from the earth, which then covered up the abyss of waters, and watered the whole face of the ground," with moisture sufficient for all the purposes of vegetation. We have all reason to believe, that the case will be the same when Paradise is restored. Consequently, there will be no clouds or fogs: but one bright, refulgent day. Much less will there be any poisonous damps or pestilential blasts. There will be no Sirocco in Italy, no parching or suffocating winds in Arabia: no keen North-east winds in our own country.

"Shattering the graceful locks of yon fair trees;"

but only pleasing, healthful breezes,

"Fanning the earth with odoriferous wings."

12. But what a change will the element of water

undergo, when all things are made new? It will be in every part of the world clear and limpid, pure from all unpleasing or unhealthful mixtures, rising here and there in crystal fountains, to refresh and adorn the earth, "With liquid lapse of murmuring stream." For undoubtedly as there were in Paradise, there will be various rivers gently gliding along, for the use and pleasure of both man and beast. But the inspired writer has expressly declared, *there will be no more sea*, (Rev. xxi. 1.) We have reason to believe, that at the beginning of the world, when God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear," (Gen. i. ver. 9.) the dry land spread over the face of the water, and covered it on every side. And so it seems to have done, till, in order to the general deluge, which God had determined to bring upon the earth at once, "the windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up." But the sea will then retire with its primitive bounds, and appear on the surface of the earth no more. Neither indeed will there be any more need of the sea. For either as the ancient poet supposes.

Omnis feret omnia tellus:

Every part of the earth will naturally produce whatever its inhabitants want: or all mankind will procure what the whole earth affords, by a much easier and readier conveyance. For all the inhabitants of the earth, our Lord informs us, will then be *equal to angels:* on a level with them in swiftness as well as strength; so that they can, quick as thought, transport themselves, or whatever they want, from one side of the globe to the other.

13. But it seems, a greater change will be wrought in the *earth*, than even in the air and water. Not that I can believe that wonderful discovery of Jacob Behme, which many so eagerly contend for, that the earth itself, with all its furniture and inhabitants, will then be transparent as glass. There does not seem to be the least foundation for this, either in scripture or reason. Surely not in scripture: I know not one text in the Old or New Testament which affirms any such thing. Certainly it cannot be inferred from that text in the Revelation, chapter the fourth, verse the sixth, "And before the throne there was a sea of glass, like unto crystal." And yet, if I mistake not, this is the chief, if not the only scripture which has been urged in favour of this opinion! Neither can I conceive that it has any foundation in reason. It has been warmly alleged, that all things would be far more beautiful, if they were quite transparent. But I cannot apprehend this: yea, I apprehend quite the contrary. Suppose every part of a human body were made transparent as crystal, would it appear more beautiful than it does now? Nay, rather it would shock us above measure. The surface of the body in particular, "The human face divine," is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful objects that can be found under heaven. But could you look through the rosy cheek, the smooth fair forehead, or the rising bosom, and distinctly see all that lies within, you would turn away from it with loathing and horror.

14. Let us next take a view of those changes which we may reasonably suppose will then take place in the earth. It will no more be bound up with intense cold, nor parched up with extreme heat, but will have such a temperature as will be most con-

ducive to its fruitfulness. If in order to punish its inhabitants, God did of old

> " Bid his angels turn askance
> This oblique Globe,"

thereby occasioned violent cold on one part, and violent heat on the other; he will undoubtedly then order them to restore it to its original position: so that there will be a final end, on the one hand, of the burning heat which makes some parts of it scarce habitable; and on the other of

> " The rage of Arctos and eternal frost."

15. And it will then contain no jarring or destructive principles within its own bosom. It will no more have any of those violent convulsions in its own bowels. It will no more be shaken or torn asunder, by the impetuous force of earthquakes: and will therefore need neither Vesuvius nor Ætna, nor any burning mountains to prevent them. There will be no more horrid rocks, or frightful precipices; no wild deserts or barren sands; no impassable morasses, or unfruitful bogs, to swallow up the unwary traveller. There will doubtless be inequalities on the surface of the earth, which are not blemishes, but beauties. And though I will not affirm, That

> " Earth hath this variety from heaven
> Of pleasure situate in hill and dale;"

yet I cannot think gently-rising hills will be any defect, but an ornament to the new-made earth. And doubtless we shall then likewise have occasion to say,

" Lo there his wondrous skill arrays
The fields in cheerful green !
A thousand herbs his hand displays,
A thousand flowers between !"

16. And what will the general produce of the earth be ? Not thorns, briars, or thistles. Not any useless or fetid weed ; not any poisonous, hurtful, or unpleasant plant ; but every one that can be conducive in any wise either to our use or pleasure. How far beyond all that the most lively imagination is now able to conceive ! We shall no more regret the loss of the terrestrial paradise, or sigh at that well-devised description of our great Poet.

" Then shall this mount
Of Paradise by might of waves be mov'd
Out of his place, push'd by the horned flood.
With all its verdure spoil'd and trees adrift,
Down the great river to the opening gulf,
And there take root, an island salt and bare !"

For all the earth shall be a more beautiful paradise than Adam ever saw.

16. Such will be the state of the new earth, with regard to the meaner, the inanimate parts of it. But great as this change will be, it is nothing in comparison of that which will then take place throughout all animated nature. In the living part of the creation were seen the most deplorable effects of Adam's apostacy. The whole animated creation, whatever has life, from leviathan to the smallest mite, was thereby *made subject* to such *vanity*, as the inanimate creatures could not be. They were subject to that fell monster, Death, the conqueror of all that breathe. They were made subject to its forerunner,

pain, in its ten thousand forms; although "God made not death, neither hath he pleasure in the death of any living." How many millions of creatures in the sea, in the air, and on every part of the earth can now no otherwise preserve their lives, than by taking away the lives of others; by tearing in pieces and devouring their poor, innocent, unresisting fellow-creatures! Miserable lot of such innumerable multitudes, who, insignificant as they seem, are the offspring of one common Father, the creatures of the same God of love! It is probable, not only two-thirds of the animal creation, but ninety-nine parts of a hundred, are under a necessity of destroying others in order to preserve their own life! But it shall not always be so. He that sitteth upon the throne, will soon change the face of all things, and give a demonstrative proof to all creatures, that *his mercy is over all his works.* The horrid state of things, which at present obtains, will soon be at an end. On the new earth, no creature will kill, or hurt, or give pain to any other. The scorpion will have no poisonous sting, the adder no venomous teeth. The lion will have no claws to tear the lamb: no teeth to grind his flesh and bones. Nay, no creature, no beast, bird or fish, will have any inclination to hurt any other. For cruelty will be far away, and savageness and fierceness be forgotten. So that violence shall be heard no more, neither wasting or destruction seen on the face of the earth. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb; (the words may be literally, as well as figuratively understood) and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. They shall not hurt or destroy," from the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same.

18. But the most glorious of all will be, the change which then will take place on the poor, sinful, miserable children of men. These had fallen in many

respects as from a greater height, so into a lower depth than any other part of the creation. But they shall *hear a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men. And he will dwell with them : and they shall be his people : and God himself shall be their God.* Rev. xxi. ver. 3, 4. Hence will arise an unmixt state of holiness, and happiness far superior to that which Adam enjoyed in Paradise. In how beautiful a manner is this described by the Apostle ! *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes : and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are done away.* As there will be no more death, and no more pain or sickness preparatory thereto : as there will be no more grieving for, or parting with friends, so there will be no more sorrow or crying. Nay, but there will be a greater deliverance than all this: for there will be no more sin. And to crown all, there will be a deep, an intimate, an uninterrupted union with God. A constant communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, through the Spirit ; a continual enjoyment of the Three-One God, and of all the creatures in him !

THE DUTY OF REPROVING OUR NEIGHBOUR.

A

SERMON

ON LEV. xix. 17.

LEVITICUS xix. 17.

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

A GREAT part of the book of Exodus, and almost the whole of the book of Leviticus, relate to the ritual or ceremonial law of Moses, which was peculiarly given to the children of Israel; but was such *a yoke*, says the Apostle Peter, "as neither our fathers nor we are able to bear." We are therefore delivered from it: and this is one branch of "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." Yet it is easy to observe that many excellent moral precepts are interspersed among these Ceremonial Laws. Several of them we find in this very chapter. Such as, "Thou shalt not gather every grape of thy vineyard. Thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger. I am the Lord your God, ver. 10. Ye shall not steal, neither lie one to another, ver. 11. Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee till the morning, ver. 13. Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind: but shalt fear thy God: I am the Lord," ver. 14. As if he had said, I am he whose eyes are over all the earth, and whose ears are open to their cry. "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor," which compassionate men may be tempted to do: "nor honour the person of the mighty;" to which there are a thousand temptations, ver. 15. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-

bearer among thy people," ver. 16. although this is a sin which human laws have never yet been able to prevent. Then follows, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him."

In order to understand this important direction aright, and to apply it profitably to our own souls, let us consider,

First, What it is that we are to rebuke or reprove? What is the thing that is here enjoined? Secondly, Who are they whom we are commanded to reprove? and Thirdly, How we are to reprove them?

I. 1. Let us consider, first, What is the duty that is here enjoined? What is it we are to rebuke or reprove? And what is it, To reprove. What is it to reprove? To tell any one of his faults, as clearly appears from the following words, "Thou shalt not suffer sin upon him." Sin is therefore the thing we are called to reprove, or rather him that commits sin. We are to do all that in us lies to convince him of his fault and lead him into the right way.

2. Love indeed requires us to warn him, not only of sin, (although of this chiefly) but likewise of any error, which if it were persisted in, would naturally lead to sin. If we do not hate him in our heart, if we love our neighbour as ourselves, this will be our constant endeavour, to warn him of every evil way and of every mistake which tends to evil.

3. But if we desire not to lose our labour, we should rarely reprove any one for any thing that is of a disputable nature: that will bear much to be said on both sides. A thing may possibly appear evil to me: therefore I scruple the doing of it. And if I were to do it while that scruple remains, I should be

a sinner before God. But another is not to be judged by my conscience, to his own master he standeth or falleth. Therefore I would not reprove him, but for what is clearly and undeniably evil. Such, for instance, is profane cursing and swearing, which even those who practise it most, will not often venture to defend, if one mildly expostulates with them. Such is drunkenness, which even an habitual drunkard will condemn when he is sober. And such, in the account of the generality of people, is the profaning of the Lord's day. And if any who are guilty of these sins, for a while attempt to defend them, very few persist to do it, if you look them steadily in the face, and appeal to their own conscience in the sight of God.

II. 1. Let us, in the second place, consider, Who are those that we are called to reprove? It is the more needful to consider this, because it is affirmed by many serious persons, That there are some sinners whom the scripture itself forbids us to reprove. This sense has been put on that solemn caution of our Lord, in his sermon on the Mount, "Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot, and turn again and rend you." But the plain meaning of these words is, do not offer the pearls, the sublime doctrines or mysteries of the Gospel, to those whom you know to be brutish men, immersed in sins, having no fear of God before their eyes. This would expose those precious jewels to contempt, and yourselves to injurious treatment. But even those whom we know to be in our Lord's sense dogs and swine, if we saw them do, or heard them speak, what they themselves know to be evil, we ought in any wise to reprove them; else we hate our brother in our heart.

2. The persons intended by *our neighbour* are every child of man, every one that breathes the vital air, all that have souls to be saved. And if we refrain from performing this office of love to any, because they are sinners above other men, they may persist in their iniquity, but their blood will God require at our hands.

3. How striking is Mr. Baxter's reflection on this head, in his Saint's Everlasting Rest. "Suppose thou wert to meet one in the lower world, to whom thou hadst denied this office of love, when ye were both together under the sun; what answer couldst thou make to his upbraiding? At such a time and place while we were under the sun, God delivered me into thy hands. I then did not know the way of salvation, but was seeking death in the error of my life. And therein thou sufferedst me to remain, without once endeavouring to awake me out of sleep! Hadst thou imparted to me thy knowledge, and warned me to flee from the wrath to come, neither I nor thou need ever have come into this place of torment."

4. Every one therefore that has a soul to be saved, is entitled to this good office from thee. Yet this does not imply that it is done in the same degree to every one. It cannot be denied, that there are some, to whom it is particularly due. Such, in the first place, are our parents, if we have any that stand in need of it: unless we should place our consorts and our children on an equal footing with them. Next to those we may rank our brothers and sisters, and afterwards our relations as they are allied to us in a nearer or more distant manner, either by blood or by marriage. Immediately after these are our servants, whether bound to us for a term of years, or any shorter term. Lastly, such in their several degrees are our countrymen, our fellow-citizens, and

the members of the same society, whether civil or religious: the latter have a particular claim to our service: seeing these societies are formed with that very design, to watch over each other for this very end, that we may not suffer sin upon our brother. If we neglect to reprove any of these, when a fair opportunity offers, we are undoubtedly to be ranked among those that *hate* their *brother in their heart*. And how severe is the sentence of the Apostle, against those who fall under this condemnation! *He that hateth his brother*, though it does not break out into words or actions, *is a murderer*. *And ye know*, continues the Apostle, *that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*. He hath not that seed planted in his soul, which groweth up into everlasting life. In other words, he is in such a state, that if he dies therein he cannot see life. It plainly follows, That to neglect this, is no small thing, but eminently endangers our final salvation.

III. We have seen what is meant by reproving our brother, and who those are that we should reprove. But the principal thing remains to be considered, How, In what manner are we to reprove them?

1. It must be allowed, that there is a considerable difficulty in performing this in a right manner. Although at the same time, it is far less difficult to some than it is to others. Some there are who are particularly qualified for it, whether by nature, or practice, or grace. They are not encumbered either with evil shame, or that sore burden, the fear of man. They are both ready to undertake this labour of love, and skilful in performing it. To these therefore it is little or no cross: nay, they have a kind of relish for it, and a satisfaction therein, over

and above that which arises from a consciousness of having done their duty. But be it a cross to us, greater or less, we know that hereunto we are called. And be the difficulty ever so great to us, we know in whom we have trusted: and that he will surely fulfil his word, "As thy day, to shall thy strength be."

2. In what manner then shall we reprove our brother, in order that our reproof may be most effectual? Let us first of all take care, that whatever we do may be done in *the spirit of love;* in the spirit of tender good-will to our neighbour, as for one who is the son of our common father, and one for whom Christ died, that he might be a partaker of salvation. Then, by the grace of God, love will beget love. The affection of the speaker will spread to the heart of the hearer: and you will find in due time, that your labour hath not been in vain in the Lord.

3. Mean time the greatest care must be taken, that you speak in the spirit of *humility*. Beware that you do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. If you think too highly of yourself, you can scarce avoid despising your brother. And if you show, or even feel the least contempt of him whom you reprove, it will blast your whole work, and occasion you to lose all your labour. In order to prevent the very appearance of pride, it will be often needful to be explicit on the head: to disclaim all preferring yourself before him: and at the very time you reprove that which is evil, to own and bless God for that which is good in him.

4. Great care must be taken, in the third place, to speak in the spirit of *meekness*, as well as *lowliness*. The Apostle assures us, *that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* Anger, though it be adorned with the name of zeal, begets

anger; not love or holiness. We should therefore avoid with all possible care, the very appearance of it. Let there be no trace of it, either in the eyes, the gesture, or the tone of voice: but let these concur in manifesting a loving, humble, and dispassionate spirit.

5. But all this time see that you do not trust in yourself. Put no confidence in your own wisdom or address, or abilities of any kind. For the success of all you speak or do, trust not in yourself, but in the great Author of every good and perfect gift. Therefore, while you are speaking, continually lift up your heart to him that worketh all in all. And whatsoever is spoken in the spirit of *prayer*, will not fall to the ground.

6. So much for the *spirit* wherewith you should speak, when you reprove your neighbour. I now proceed to the outward *manner*. It has been frequently found, that the prefacing a reproof with a frank profession of good-will, has caused what was spoken to sink deep into the heart. This will generally have a far better effect than that grand fashionable engine, flattery, by means of which the men of the world have often done surprising things. But the very same things, yea, far greater, have much oftener been effected, by a plain and artless declaration of disinterested love. When you feel God has kindled his flame in your heart, hide it not; give it full vent. It will pierce like lightning. The stout, the hard-hearted will melt before you, and know that God is with you of a truth.

7. Although it is certain that the main point in reproving is, to do it with a right spirit, yet it must also be allowed there are several little circumstances with regard to the outward manner, which are by no means without their use, and therefore are not to be

despised. One of these is, Whenever you reprove, do it with great *seriousness:* so that as you really are in earnest, you may likewise appear so to be. A ludicrous reproof makes little impression, and is soon forgot. Besides, that it many times is taken ill, as if you ridiculed the person you reprove. And indeed, those who are not accustomed to make jests, do not take it well to be jested upon. One means of giving a serious air to what you speak, is as often as may be, to use the very words of scripture. Frequently we find the word of God, even in a private conversation, has a peculiar energy: and the sinner when he expects it least, feels it *sharper than a two-edged sword.*

8. Yet there are some exceptions to this general rule of reproving seriously. There are some exempt cases, wherein, as a good judge of human nature observes,

Ridiculum acri fortius.

A little well-placed raillery will pierce deeper than solid argument. But this has place chiefly, when we have to do with those who are strangers to religion. And when we condescend to give a ludicrous reproof to a person of this character, it seems we are authorized so to do by that advice of Solomon, "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes."

9. The manner of reproof may in other respects too, be varied according to the occasion. Sometimes you may find it proper to use many words, to express your sense at large. At other times you may judge it more expedient to use few words: perhaps a single sentence. And at others, it may be adviseable to use no words at all; but a gesture, a

sigh, or a look. Particularly when the person you would reprove, is greatly your superior. And frequently this silent kind of reproof will be attended by the power of God, and consequently have a far better effect than a long and laboured discourse.

10. Once more. Remember the remark of Solomon, "A word spoken in season, how good is it?" It is true, if you are providentially called to reprove any one, whom you are not likely to see any more, you are to snatch the present opportunity, and to speak *in season*, or *out of season*. But with them whom you have frequent opportunities of seeing, you may wait for a fair occasion. Here the advice of the poet has place. You may speak

Si validus, si lætus erit, si denique poscit:

When he is in a good humour, or when he asks it of you. Here you may catch the

Mollia tempora fandi:

The time when his mind is in a soft mild frame. And then God will both teach you how to speak, and give a blessing to what is spoken.

11. But here let me guard you against one mistake. It passes for an indisputable maxim, "Never attempt to reprove a man when he is intoxicated with drink." Reproof, it is said, is then thrown away, and can have no good effect. I dare not say so. I have seen not a few clear instances of the contrary. Take one; Many years ago, passing by a man in Moorfields, who was so drunk he could hardly stand, I put a paper into his hand. He looked at it, and said, "A word—a word to a drunkard—that is me—Sir, Sir! I am wrong—I know I am

wrong—pray let me talk a little with you." He held me by the hand a full half hour. And I believe he got drunk no more.

12. I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, do not despise our poor drunkards. Have compassion on them. Be instant with them, in season, and out of season! Let not shame, or fear of men, prevent your pulling these brands out of the burning; many of them are self-condemned:

"Nor do they discern the evil plight,
That they are in."

But they despair: they have no hope of escaping out of it. And they sink into it still deeper, because none else has any hope for them! "Sinners of every sort," said a venerable old clergyman, "have I frequently known converted to God. But an habitual drunkard, I have never known converted." But I have known five hundred, perhaps five thousand. Ho! Art thou one, who readest these words? Then hear thou the words of the Lord! I have a message from God unto thee, O sinner! Thus saith the Lord, Cast not away thy hope. I have not forgotten thee. He that tells thee, "There is no help," is a liar from the beginning. Look up! Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world! This day is salvation come to thy soul: only see that thou despise not him that speaketh! Just now he saith unto thee, "Son, be of good cheer! Thy sins are forgiven thee!"

13. Lastly. You that are diligent in this labour of love, see that you be not discouraged, although after you have used your best endeavours, you should see no present fruit. You have need of *patience*, and then *after ye have done the will of God*

herein, the harvest will come. Never be *weary of well-doing: in due time ye shall reap if ye faint not.* Copy after Abraham, who *against hope, still believed in hope. Cast thy bread upon the waters, and after many days thou shalt find it again.*

14. I have now only a few words to add unto you, my brethren, who are vulgarly called Methodists. I never heard or read of any considerable revival of religion, which was not attended with a spirit of reproving. I believe it cannot be otherwise; for what is faith unless it worketh by love? Thus it was in every part of England, when the present revival of religion began about fifty years ago: all the subjects of that revival, all the Methodists, so called in every place, were reprovers of outward sin. And indeed so are all that "being justified by faith, have peace with God through Jesus Christ." Such they are at first: and if they use that precious gift, it will never be taken away. Come, brethren! In the name of God, let us begin again! Rich or poor, let us all arise as one man! And in any wise, let every man "rebuke his neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." Then shall all Great Britain and Ireland know, that we do not "go a warfare at our own cost." Yea, "God shall bless us, and all the ends of the world shall fear him."

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

A

SERMON

ON MATTHEW xvi. 3.

Ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

1. THE entire passage runs thus, "The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting, desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather; for the sky is red; and in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

2. "The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came." In general these were quite opposite to each other: but it is no uncommon thing for the children of the world to lay aside their opposition to each other, (at least for a season) and cordially to unite in opposing the children of God: "and tempting," that is, making a trial, whether he was indeed sent of God, "desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven," which they believed no false prophet was able to do. It is not improbable, they imagined this would convince them that he was really sent from God. "He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather, for the sky is red: and in the morning, it will be foul weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowering." Probably there were more certain signs of fair and foul weather in their climate than there are in ours. *O ye hypocrites*, making profession of love, while you have enmity in your hearts: *Ye can discern the face*

of the sky, and judge thereby what the weather will be: *but can ye not discern the signs of the times?* when God brings his first-begotten Son into the world?

3. Let us more particularly inquire, first, What were *the times* whereof our Lord here speaks? And what were *the signs* whereby those times were to be distinguished from all others? We may then inquire, secondly, What are *the times* which we have reason to believe are *now* at hand? And how is it that all who are called Christians do not discern *the signs of these times?*

I. 1. Let us in the first place, inquire, What times were those concerning which our Lord is here speaking? It is easy to answer, The times of the Messiah: the times ordained before the foundation of the world, wherein it pleased God, to give his only-begotten Son, to take our nature upon him, to *be found in fashion as a man*, to live a life of sorrow and pain, and at length to be "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; to the end that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This was the important time, the signs whereof the Pharisees and Sadducees could not discern. Clear as they were in themselves, yet so thick a vail was upon the heart of those men that they did not discern the tokens of his coming, though foretold so long before.

2. But what were those signs of the coming of that Just One, which had been so long and so clearly foretold? and whereby they might easily have discerned those times, had not the vail been on their heart? They are many in number; but it may suffice to mention a few of them. One of the first is that pointed out in the solemn words spoken by Jacob a

little before his death, Gen. xlix. 10. " The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." All, both ancient and modern Jews agree, that by *Shiloh* we are to understand the Messiah : who was therefore to come according to the prophecy, before the Sceptre, that is, the sovereignty, departed from Judah. But it did without controversy depart from Judah at this very time, an infallible sign that at this very time Shiloh, that is, the Messiah, came.

3. A second eminent sign of those times, the time of the coming of the Messiah, is given us in the third chapter of the prophecy of Malachi : " Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me : and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple." How manifestly was this fulfilled, first, by the coming of John the Baptist? And then by our blessed Lord himself, coming suddenly to his temple ? And what sign could be clearer to those that impartially considered the words of the prophet Isaiah, chap. xl. ver. 4. " The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight !"

4. But yet clearer signs than these (if any could be clearer) were the mighty works that he wrought. Accordingly he himself declares, " The works which I do, they testify of me." And to these he explicitly appeals in his answer to the question of John the Baptist : (Not proposed, as some have strangely imagined, from any doubt which he had himself ; but from a desire of confirming his disciples, who might possibly waver, when their master was taken from their head :) " Art thou he that should come, (the Messiah) or look we for another?" No bare verbal answer could have been so convincing, as what they saw with their own eyes. Jesus

therefore referred them to this testimony: "He answered and said unto them, Go and show John these things which ye hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk: the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them," Matt. xi. 4, 5.

5. But how then came it to pass, that those who were so sharp-sighted in other things, who could discern the face of the sky, were not able to discern those signs, which indicated the coming of the Messiah? They could not discern them, not for want of evidence: this was full and clear: but for want of integrity in themselves: because they were a wicked and adulterous generation: because the perverseness of their hearts spread a cloud over their understanding. Therefore although the Sun of Righteousness shone bright, yet they were insensible of it. They were not willing to be convinced; therefore they remained in ignorance. The light was sufficient; but they shut their eyes that they might not see it. So that they were without excuse, till vengeance came upon them to the uttermost.

II. 1. We are, in the second place, to consider, What are the *times* which we have reason to believe are *now* at hand? And how is it that all who are called Christians do not discern *the signs of the times?*

The times which we have reason to believe are at hand (if they are not already begun) are what many pious men have termed, The time of *the latter day glory:* meaning the time wherein God would gloriously display his power and love, in the fulfilment of his gracious promise, that "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

2. " But are there in England, or any part of the world, any *signs* of such a time approaching ?" It is not many years since, that a person of considerable learning as well as eminence in the church, (then Bishop of London) in his pastoral letter, made this observation, " I cannot imagine what persons mean, by talking of *a great work of God* at this time. I do not see any work of God now, more than has been at any other time." I believe it. I believe that great man did not see any extraordinary work of God. Neither he nor the generality of Christians, so called, saw any signs of the glorious day that is approaching. But how is this to be accounted for ? How is it that those who can discern the face of the sky, who are not only great philosophers, but great divines, as eminent as ever the Sadducees, yea, or the Pharisees were, do not discern the signs of those glorious times, which, if not begun, are nigh, even at the door ?

3. We allow indeed, that in every age of the Church, *the kingdom of God came not with observation :* not with splendour and pomp, or with any of those outward circumstances which usually attend the kingdoms of this world. We allow this *kingdom of God is within us :* and that consequently when it begins, either in an individual or in a nation, it is like a grain of mustard-seed, which at first is the least of all seeds ; but nevertheless gradually increases, till it becomes a great tree. Or, to use the other comparison of our Lord, it is like " a little leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

4. But may it not be asked, Are there now any signs that the day of God's power is approaching ? I appeal to every candid, unprejudiced person, whether we may not at this day discern all those signs

(understanding the words in a spiritual sense) to which our Lord referred John's disciples. *The blind receive their sight.* Those who were blind from their birth, unable to see their own deplorable state, and much more to see God and the remedy he has prepared for them in the Son of his love, now see themselves, yea, and "the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." *The eyes* of their *understanding* being now *opened*, they see all things clearly. *The deaf hear.* Those that were before utterly deaf, to all the outward and inward calls of God, now hear not only his providential calls, but also the whispers of his grace. *The lame walk.* Those who never before arose from the earth, or moved one step toward heaven, are now walking in all the ways of God; yea, running the race that is set before them. *The lepers are cleansed.* The deadly leprosy of sin, which they brought with them into the world, and which no art of man could ever cure, is now clean departed from them. And surely never in any age or nation since the Apostles, have those words been so eminently fulfilled, "The poor have the Gospel preached unto them," as at this day. At this day the Gospel-leaven, faith working by love, inward and outward holiness, or (to use the terms of St. Paul,) "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," have) so spread in various parts of Europe, particularly in England, Scotland, Ireland, in the islands, in the North and South, from Georgia to New-England, and Newfoundland: that sinners have been truly converted to God, thoroughly changed both in heart and in life; not by tens, or by hundreds only, but by thousands, yea, by myriads! The fact cannot he denied: we can point out the persons with their names and places of abode. And yet the wise men of the world, the men of eminence, the men

of learning and renown, "cannot imagine what we mean by talking of any extraordinary work of God!" They cannot discern the signs of *these times!* They can see no sign at all of God's arising to maintain his own cause, and set up his kingdom over the earth!

5. But how can this be accounted for? How is it that they cannot discern the signs of these times? We may account for their want of discernment on the same principle we accounted for that of the Pharisees and Sadducees; namely, that they likewise are what those were, an *adulterous and sinful generation.* If their eye was single, their whole body would be full of light. But suppose their eye be evil, their whole body must be full of darkness. Every evil temper darkens the soul: every evil passion clouds the understanding. How then can we expect, that those should be able to discern the signs of the times, who are full of all disorderly passions, and slaves to every evil temper? But this is really the case. They are vain; they "seek honour one of another, and not the honour that cometh of God only." They cherish hatred and malice in their hearts: they give place to anger, to envy, to revenge. They return evil for evil and railing for railing. Instead of overcoming evil with good, they make no scruple of demanding an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. They "savour not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men." They set their affections not on things above, but on the things that are of the earth. They "love the creature more than the Creator:" they are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." How then should they discern the signs of the times? The god of this world, whom they serve, has blinded their hearts, and covered their minds with a vail of thick darkness. Alas! What

have these "souls of flesh and blood," (as one speaks) to do with God, or the things of God?

6. St. ohn assigns this very reason, for the Jews not understanding the things of God, namely, That in consequence of their preceding sins, and wilful rejecting the light, God had now delivered them up to Satan, who had blinded them past recovery. Over and over, when they might have seen, they would not: they shut their eyes against the light. And now they cannot see, God having given them up to an undiscerning mind; therefore they do not believe because that Isaiah said, (that is, because of the reason given in that saying of Isaiah) He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them." The plain meaning is, Not that God did this by his own immediate power. It would be flat blasphemy to say, that God in this sense hardens any man. But his Spirit strives with them no longer, and then Satan hardens them effectually.

7. And as it was with them in ancient times, so it is with the present generation. Thousands of those who bear the name of Christ are now given up to an undiscerning mind. The god of this world hath so blinded their eyes that the light cannot shine upon them; so that they can no more discern the signs of the times, than the Pharisees and Sadducees could of old. A wonderful instance of this spiritual blindness, this total inability to discern the signs of the times mentioned in scripture, is given us in the very celebrated work of a late eminent Writer: who supposes, *the New Jerusalem came down from heaven*, when Constantine the Great called himself a Christian. I say, *called himself a Christian*; for I dare not affirm that he *was one*, any more than Peter the

Great. I cannot but believe, he would have come nearer the mark, if he had said, that was the time, when a huge cloud of infernal brimstone and smoke came up from the bottomless pit. For surely there never was a time wherein Satan gained so fatal an advantage over the Church of Christ, as when such a flood of riches, and honour, and power broke in upon it, particularly on the Clergy.

8. By the same rule, what signs would this writer have expected of the approaching conversion of the Heathens? He would doubtless have expected a hero, like Charles of Sweden, or Frederick of Prussia, to carry fire, and sword, and Christianity through whole nations at once. And it cannot be denied, that since the time of Constantine, many nations have been converted in this way. But could it be said concerning such conversions as these, "The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation!" Surely every one must observe a warrior rushing through the land, at the head of fifty or sixty thousand men! But is this the way of spreading christianity, which the author of it, the Prince of peace, has chosen? Nay it is not in this manner, that a grain of mustard-seed grows up into a great tree. It is not thus that "a little leaven leavens the whole lump." Rather, it spreads by degrees farther and farther, till the whole is leavened. We may form a judgment of what will be hereafter, by what we have seen already. And this is the way wherein true Christian religion, the faith that worketh by love, has been spreading, particularly through Great Britain and its dependencies, for half a century.

9. In the same manner it continues to spread, at the present time also, as may easily appear to all those whose eyes are not blinded. All those that experience in their own hearts the power of God unto salvation, will readily perceive how the same religion which they enjoy, is still spreading from heart to heart.

They take knowledge of the same grace of God, strongly and sweetly working on every side: and rejoice to find another and another sinner, first, enquiring, "What must I do to be saved?" And then testifying, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour." Upon a fair and candid enquiry, they find more and more, not only of those who had some form of religion, but of those who had no form at all, who were profligate, abandoned sinners, now entirely changed, truly fearing God and working righteousness. They observe more and more, even of these poor outcasts of men, who are inwardly and outwardly changed, loving God and their neighbour; living in the uniform practice of justice, mercy and truth: As they have time, doing good to all men: Easy and happy in their lives, and triumphant in their death.

10. What excuse then have any that believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, for not discerning the signs of these times, as preparatory to the general call of the Heathens? What could God have done which he hath not done to convince you that the day is coming, that the time is at hand when he will fulfil his glorious promises; when he will arise to maintain his own cause, and to set up his kingdom over all the earth? What indeed, unless he had *forced* you to believe? And this he could not do without destroying the nature which he had given you. For he made you free-agents; having an inward power of self-determination, which is essential to your nature. And he deals with you as free-agents from first to last. As such, you may shut or open your eyes, as you please. You have sufficient light shining all around you; yet you need not see it unless you will. But be assured, God is not well pleased with your shutting your eyes, and then saying, "I cannot see." I counsel you to bestow an impartial examination upon the whole affair. After a candid

enquiry into matter of fact, consider deeply, "What hath God wrought?" "Who hath seen such a thing? Who hath learned such a thing? Hath not a nation as it were been born in a day?" How swift as well as how deep, and how extensive a work has been wrought in the present age? And certainly, "Not by might, neither by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord." For how utterly inadequite were the means? How insufficient were the instruments to work any such effect! At least, those which it has pleased God to make use of in the British dominions and in America? By how unlikely instruments, has God been pleased to work from the beginning? A few, young, raw heads," said the Bishop of London.! "What can they pretend to do!" They pretended to be *that* in the hand of God, that a pen is in the hand of a man. They pretended, (and do so at this day,) to do the work whereunto they were sent; to do just what the Lord pleased. And if it be his pleasure, to throw down the walls of Jericho, the strong holds of Satan, not by the engines of war, but by the blasts of rams-horns, who shall say unto him, "What dost thou?"

11. Meantime "blessed are your eyes: for they see: many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them." You see and acknowledge the day of your visitation; such a visitation as neither you nor your fathers had known. You may well say, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad therein." You see the dawn of that glorious day, whereof all the prophets have spoken. And how shall you most effectually improve this day of your visitation?

12. The first point is, See that you yourselves receive not the blessing of God in vain. Begin at the root, if you have not already. Now repent and

believe the gospel. If you have believed, "look to yourselves, that ye lose not what you have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward! Stir up the gift of God that is within you! Walk in the light as he is in the light. And while you hold fast that which you have attained, go on unto perfection." Yea, and when you are "made perfect in love, still fergetting the things that are behind, press on to the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

13. It behoves you in the next place to help your neighbours. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." As you have time, do good unto all men, but especially unto them that are of the household of faith. Proclaim the glad tidings of salvation ready to be revealed, not only to those of your own household, not only to your relations, friends and acquaintance, but to all whom God providentially delivers into your hands. *Ye*, who already know in whom you have believed, *are the salt of the earth.* Labour to season, with the knowledge and love of God, all that you have any intercourse with. "Ye are a city set upon a hill: ye cannot, ye ought not to be hid. Ye are the light of the world." "Men do not light a candle, and put it under a bushel:" how much less the all-wise God. No, let it "shine to all that are in the house," all that are witnesses of your life and conversation. Above all, continue instant in prayer, both for yourselves, for all the Church of God, and for all the children of men, that they may remember themselves and be turned unto our God. That they likewise may enjoy the gospel-blessing on earth, and the glory of God in heaven.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

form 410